"Komori" (literally "small forest") is a small settlement in a village somewhere in the Tohoku region. There aren't any stores there, but if you have a little shopping to do, there's a small farmer's co-op supermarket and some other stores in the village's center, where the town hall is. The way there is mostly downhill, so that takes about 30 minutes, but I'm not too sure how long the trip back takes. During winter you have to go on foot because of the snow, so that'll take you something like a good hour and a half.

1

Little Forest

ワイドKCアフタヌーン

# リトル・フォレスト

五十嵐大介

ワイドKC
アフタヌーン
551

リトル・フォレスト

Little Forest

1

五十嵐大介

講談社

9784063375510

雑誌 48442-51

ISBN4-06-337551-X

C9979 ¥933E (0)

1929979009335

ワイドKCアフタヌーン
講談社 定価:本体933円(税別)

Little Forest

Cover Illustrations by
DAISUKE IGARASHI
Cover Designed by
ARTEN

ワイドKC
アフタヌーン
551

# リトル・フォレスト

Little Forest

1

五十嵐大介

講談社

講談社

Little Forest

Hotcakes & Illuminati-Manga Proudly Present

# Little Forest

## Igarashi Daisuke

## Volume 1

Credits:

Translators: ilcap (1-5), laika (6-16)

PRers: Crenshinibon, laika, blueberry & psi

Editors: dh85, NightSwan

QCers: Altilye, Synthoxide & laika

Raw Provider & Scanner: GGpX

# Little Forest

# リトル・フォレスト 1

DAISUKE IGARASHI

# CONTENTS

1st dish - Silverberry - 3
2nd dish - Worcestershire Sauce - 13
3rd dish - Hitsumi - 23
4th dish - Natto Mochi - 33
5th dish - Amazake - 43
6th dish - Bakke (Butterbur Sprouts)
7th dish - Horsetail - 67
8th dish - Breakfast on a Certain Day - 79
9th dish - Spring Cabbage - 89
10th dish - Stove Bread - 99
11th dish - Mizu (Uwabamisou) - 109
12th dish - Trout - 119
13th dish - Walnut Rice - 129
14th dish - Candied Chestnuts (Shibukawa-ni) - 139
15th dish - Carrot and Greens - 149
16th dish - Shrimp Mochi
and Ginger Mochi - 159

Little Forest

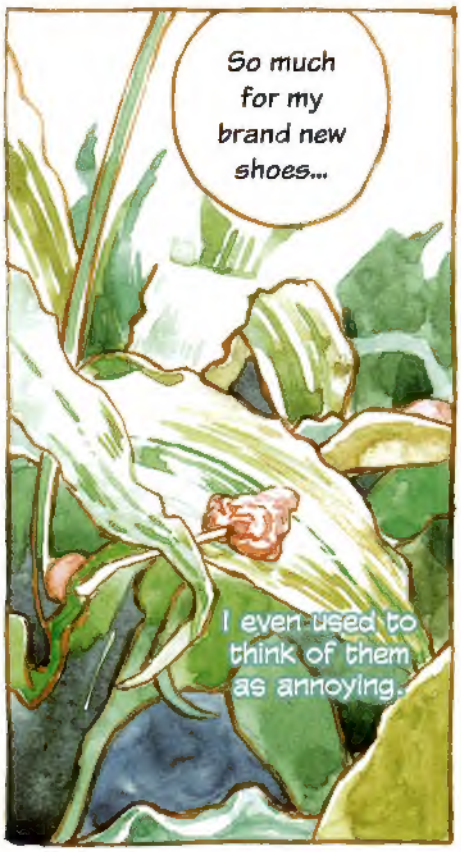
# リトル・フォレスト

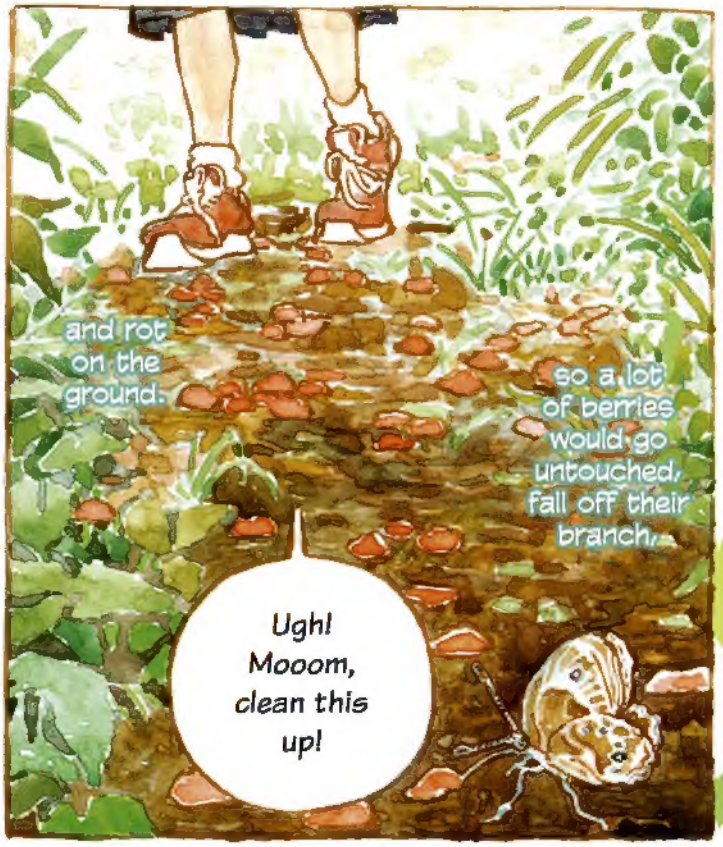
## 1st dish
### Silverberry

The small berries are hard to eat because of the large seeds.
うえ YUCK
When they're still young, they're astringent and sour.
5才

5 years old

There were all kinds of other tasty things around it,
The fully ripe berries have lost all their bitterness and are just sweet and gooey.


So much for my brand new shoes...
I even used to think of them as annoying.


and rot on the ground.
so a lot of berries would go untouched, fall off their branch,
Ugh! Mooom, clean this up!

There sure is a lot of fruit on there. What kind is it?
I went to the city and lived with a man for a while.
Hup!
Well, you *can*, but...
Can you eat 'em?
It's a silver-berry tree.
Hn!
It's too high up for me to get any more...
They're bitter.
...

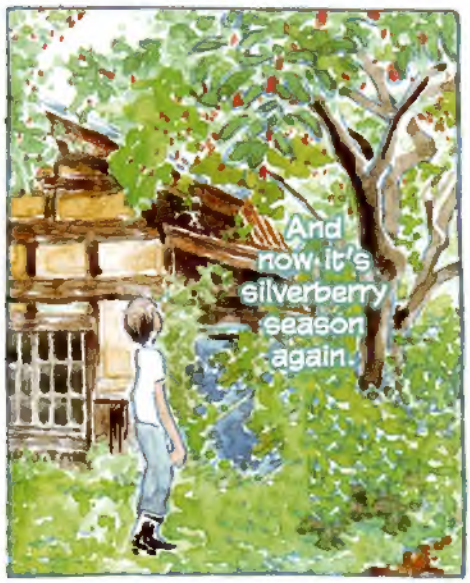
Hup!
Being a bumpkin from the mountains, physical strength was all I prided myself on.

They're good.
...They're just bitter.

There we go.

Don't need it, I'm going to pick my own.
Here.
You're just too short.
C'mon, just eat it.
Pass.

えい yahh
So it was frustrating to not be able to reach something that he could.


And now it's silverberry season again.

Things turned sour with him so I went back to Komori.

sad.

It's all piled up, does that mean it's going to waste?
That's just so...

So many berries falling to the ground only to rot away.

Guess I'll put them through a strainer.
Gotta take those seeds out.

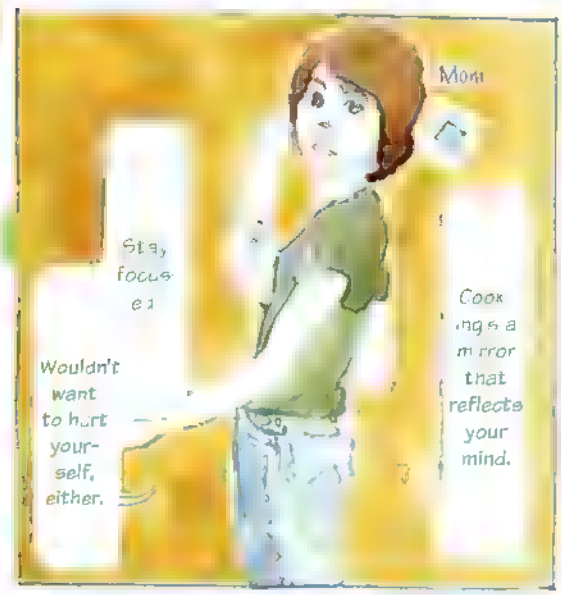
Let's try making them into a jam.

CRISH CRUSH

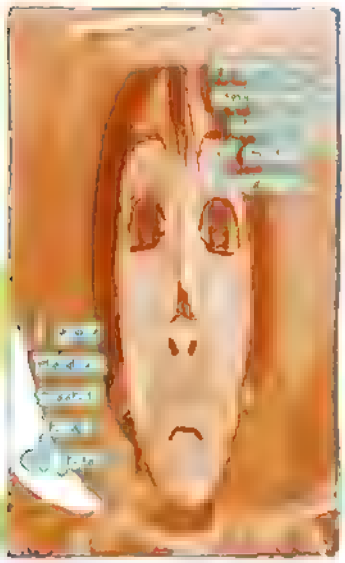
...Suddenly,
SCRITCH SCRATCH SCRITCH

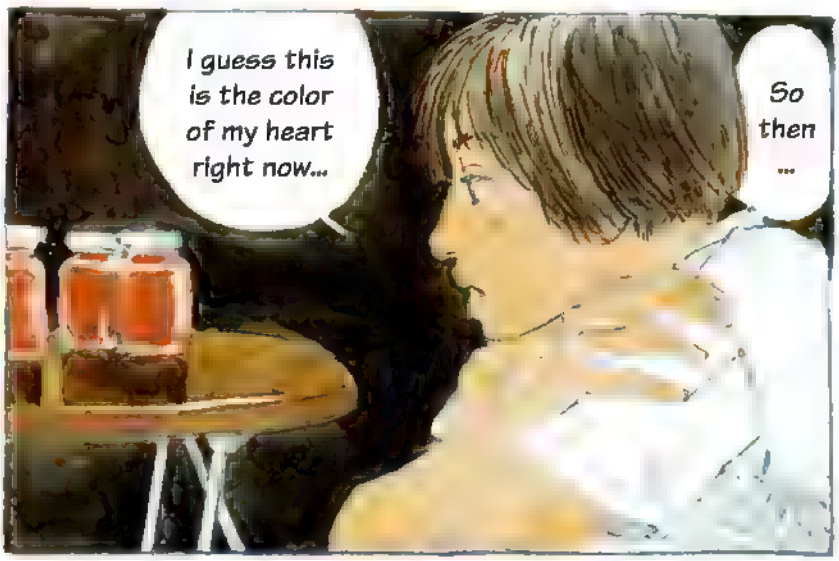
This ended up taking quite a while.

SQUASH
...
SQUISH
Stu-
pid.
I realized that I was making the jam while thinking as if I were going to let him eat it, like I used to.
They're sour, so maybe I should go with 100%... but then again.
I didn't want to make it too sweet.
add 60% of its weight in sugar to start.
"If you pour it in the jar along a knife, you don't have to worry about the jar cracking from the temperature difference."
Hmmmm, maybe I better add that sugar after all...
I wonder if it'll lose that silverberry quality once I take all the gunk out.
It may seem loose, but jam hardens up quite a bit once it cools."
"You know it's boiled down if it forms a loose ball when dropped in water.


Mom
Stay focused
Wouldn't want to hurt yourself, either.
Cooking is a mirror that reflects your mind.

Boiling them for preservation




I guess this is the color of my heart right now...
So then ...

1st dish Silverberry END

## About Komori.

"Komori" (literally "little forest")
is a small settlement in a village
somewhere in the Tohoku region.
There aren't any stores there, but
if you have a little shopping to do,
there's a small farmer's co-op
supermarket and some other stores
in the village center, where the
town hall is. The way there is mostly
downhill, so that takes about 30
minutes, but I'm not too sure how
long the trip back takes.
During winter you have to go on
foot because of the snow, so
that'll take you something like a
good hour and a half.

But it seems
that most people
do their shopping
at places like the
big suburban
supermarket in a
neighboring city.
When I decide to
go there, it nearly
ends up taking the
whole day.

It actually gets noisy
around silverberry trees when
they're in season because
of all the carpenter bees.
Unlike with hornets, though, I'm
not afraid of getting stung.

Little Forest

# 小さいお弁当

## 2nd dish

Worcestershire Sauce

There's a frog living in your stomach.

He starts croaking when you get hungry.

GRRGL

ガア

GRRGL

Mom might only have *meant* to pull my leg,

Oh

And that's "the frog in the stomach".

It was a pretty big shock.

Guess so.

So she tricked me.

that I found out that it's actually "the frog in the well".

A-yep

but it was only recently

Really?

Well, it's not exactly that she deceived me, but...

And then this other time...

we made "Worcester-shire sauce".

every year, around the time when the carrots, celery, ginger, and herbs are ready,

and add water, dried konbu, black peppercorns, mirin pickled Sichuan pep-percorns, cloves, bay leaves, as well as

I dice up some carrot, ginger, pepper and celery leaves,

Once it's reduced to about half its original volume,

sage, thyme, and sliced vegetables, all in a stainless steel pot,

and I boil that over medium heat.

Mm, *seems about right.*

I taste it along the way, throwing in some leftover jam and adding various spices...

I add soy sauce, vinegar, mirin,

and granulated sugar, and boil it for about an hour.

This is our "Worcester-shire sauce".

I use the leftover sediments in curry.

I strain it using a cloth, put it in a jar, and I'm done.

So when I found the "Worcestershire sauce" they sold in stores back when I was a student, I was surprised at first.

Huh?

Grab me the sauce.

'Kay

To me, "Worcester-shire sauce" meant a homemade sauce made with a soy sauce base.

I initially even thought that we were responsible for the trend.

I had no idea that it was widely used throughout society.

ウスター ソース 野菜たっぷり

ウスター ソース 野菜たっぷり

Bottles: Worcestershire Sauce Loaded with Vegetables

"Worcestershire sauce" originated from Britain, meaning that if anything, *our* sauce was the impostor.

Probably not

So it doesn't even have soy sauce in it?

It wasn't until much later on that I would learn that ...

A-yep

Really?

The one they sell, or the one we make?

You tell me.

Besides, which tastes better?

Er-

Well, yeah, but still...

It's not like I ever said I invented it or anything.

sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle sizz

I still accidentally write "frog in the well" with the character for "stomach".

It's pretty hard to get rid of habits you've had since you were little.

Potato croquette

but when it comes to using it directly as a sauce, only our recipe will do.

It's the same with "Worcester-shire sauce". I do use the store bought stuff when I'm cooking.

שיפ

Childhood experiences are important.

There might be many more lies that I just haven't found out about yet.

Mom used to mix lies with the truth whenever she felt like it back then.

That might be the reason I don't feel right about things unless I do them for myself.

Phew

Once you start doubting, it never ends.

ka-snip, ka-snip

but I can believe in what I feel with my body.

I just can't trust words,

FU-HEE

Now then,

Fu-hah

sugar, a little oil, and then work it until there's a nice glaze.

put that in a pot together with cocoa powder,

I mash some hazelnuts I gathered along a mountain trail until smooth,

I bake my own baguettes for this.

Spread it nice and thick on some bread to make one of my favorite treats.

Mom told me it was called "nuterra".

I didn't find out about the brand name, "Nutella",

I had no reason to doubt Mom's explanation that the name "nuterra" comes from the Japanese verb "nuru", because you spread it on food.

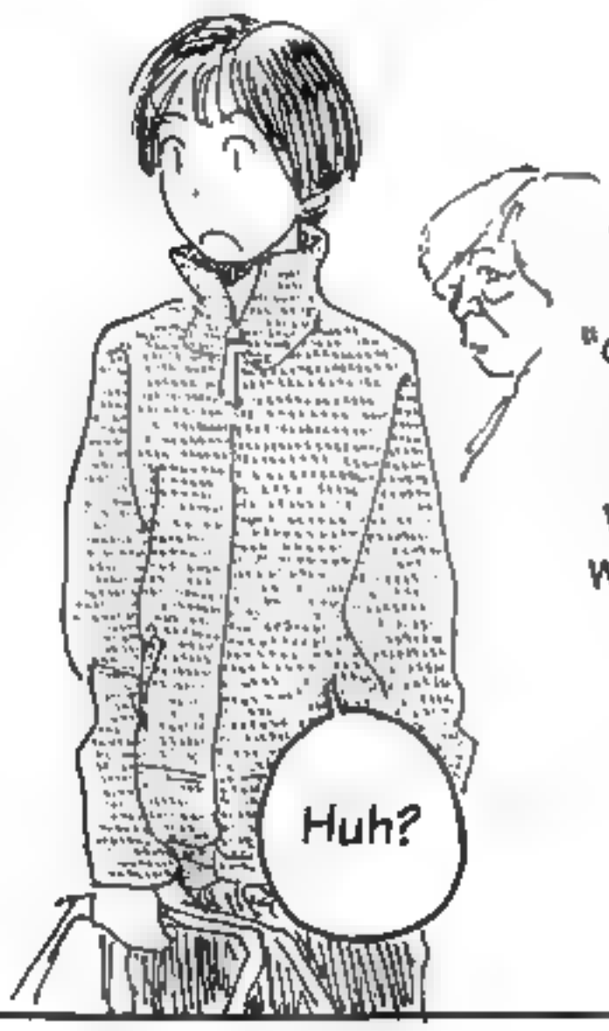
*"Nuru" means "to spread".*

Mom

To be honest, I was simply impressed.

how did you ever find out about this?

until I happened to see it in the city supermarket just the other day.



or the fact that its "chocolate hazelnut spread" was sold worldwide,

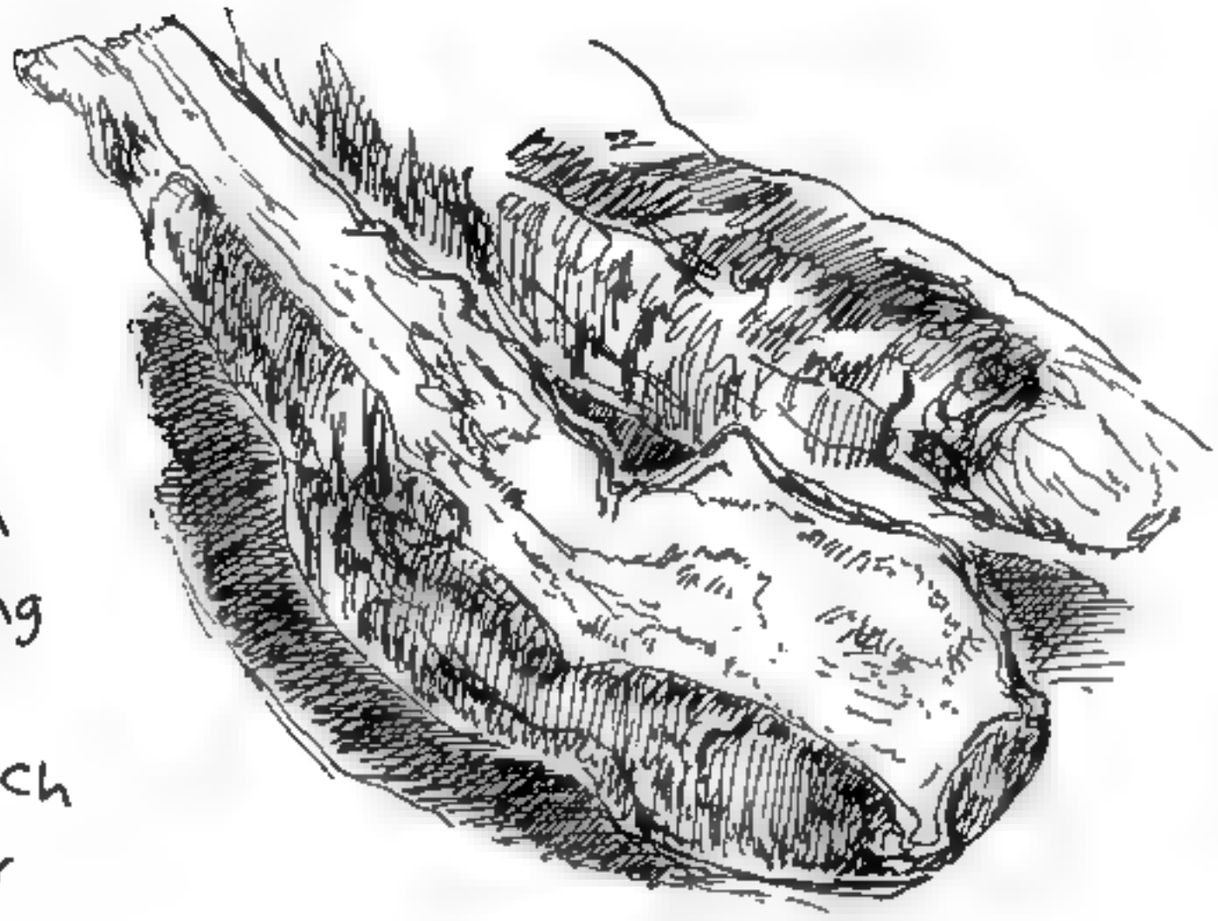
Huh?



## 2nd dish Worcestershire Sauce END

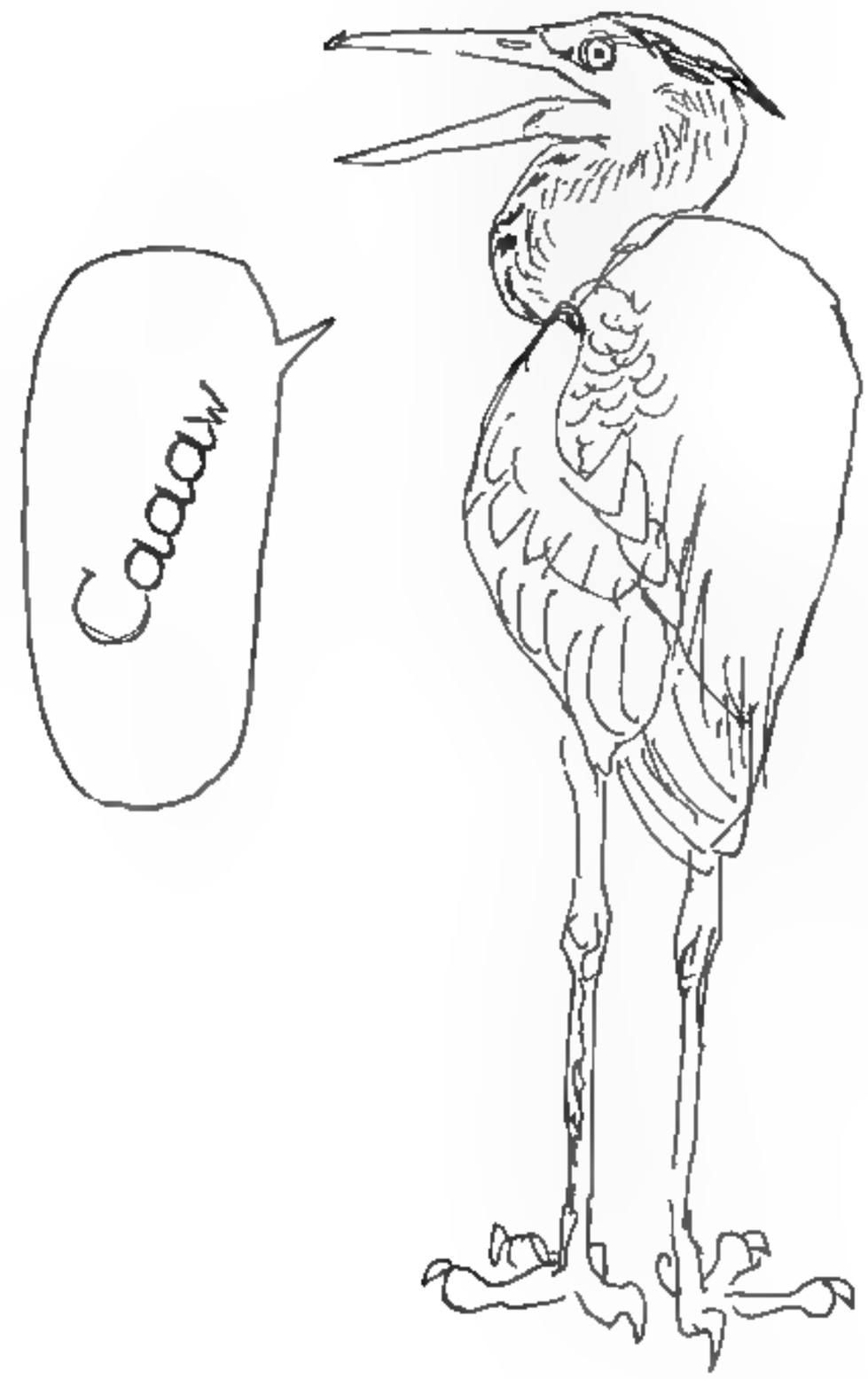
Add a little soy sauce, curry powder, and some grated ginger, lightly fry up some vegetables, throw in some basic side dishes, and you've got yourself what I make when I can't be bothered to come up with something else.

The store-bought Worcestershire sauce tastes pretty different if you just add a little spice to it.



Fried eggplant dressed in sauce

You can try making it using pretty much whatever vegetables you happen to have at the time.




There's a family of grey herons in Komori that you can see all year round, perhaps because of the fishery there. They have a loud cry that they like to make even at night, so they can give you quite a fright.

Little Forest

# ハルスミ

3rd dish

Hittsumi

I get a craving for "hittsumi" on snowy days.

To make hittsumi, you knead flour with water until it's about as solid as an earlobe, and then let it sit for over two hours.

Then you take it and tear it into parts. From there you stretch it thin and boil it in a soup.

That way I've got something tasty to eat for when I'm hungry after finishing my shoveling.

If you don't let it sit long enough, your hittsumi won't have any snap to it,

so I prepare it before going snow-shoveling.

CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP

Lemme see... What was it called, again?

Huh? Wait, isn't this...

squish

Today, I decided to try mixing in wheat bran on a whim.

Sounds so healthy

Whole wheat flour hittsumi

2

Place it on a stove with red hot coals.

CLENK

You can season it with soy sauce and ginger once you come back.

Take some gutted and headless dried sardines, dried shiitake, carrot, daikon, burdock, green onion, taro, cut-up fried tofu, sake, mirin, and water, and throw it together in a pot.

It's so pretty.

...

We were talking about a friend she works with.

All I'm saying is, just because she asks for your help,

Yesterday, I got into a fight with my neighbour, Kikko.

I think I'll go for a bit of a walk

Who do you think you are?

Ichiko...

...

Not if you really have her best interests in mind, anyway...

doesn't mean it does her any good if you bail her out every time.

You always run your mouth as if you're some know-it-all,

but that's all talk.

even though you don't really know that person?

that you know what's in a person's best interest and what isn't,

I guess that you're just so experienced

So what,

...What?

Have I ever faced anybody so straight on like that? Would I be able to say something like that?

A rabbit...

and the sun starts beaming down, snow falls from the branches.

When the clouds drift away...

It stops once there's shade.

plop plop plop

plop
plop
plop
Heh heh...
Light beams down.
I guess it's because I'm not able to face people straight on, that I came back to Komori...!
!
All right, time to get shoveling.
I'm so stupid.

I'll help shovel, so let's eat it together.

I made some curry.

Wel-come back.

S'okay.

Yes-terday... I said too much. I'm sorry...

Oh. Is this... bread? Hittsumi?

Oh, yeah, but...

GRSHA GRSHA GRSHA GRSHA GRSHA

I'll heat up the curry.

Gimme a minute, I'll get the rice ready.

About this size?

After letting it sit, divide the dough and form it into balls.

Ah, I know!

It's making popping noises.

Cook both sides on high heat in a pre-heated frying pan.

Then you roll it out with a rolling pin.

VWOOON

ブクーン

It inflated!

Whoa!

you put it directly on the burner.

And for the finishing touch,

Wait - directly on it? Are you sure it won't...

Oh, like hittsumi, then.

Yup, like hittsumi.

Yeah, although you're actually supposed to leave it overnight before making it.

This is chapati, right?

It looks and smells so good!

Authentic Indian-style curry, loaded with spices!

Coming up with tricks for making good food really is universal.

I know!

Tomorrow's another day of snow-shoveling.

let's eat!

Okay,

Tomorrow, will be hit-tsumi again, with a soup that's an old favorite of mine.



3rd dish Hittsumi END

Pumpkin hittsumi cooked with azuki beans and pumpkin

There's all kinds of possibilies for cooking with hittsumii if you think of it as a substitute for mochi, chances are you won't go wrong. It can go well with ginger and soy sauce, or azuki hittsumi wrapped in anko, or natto. If you just think of it as a type of pasta or gnocchi, then you can make Western-style dishes, too.

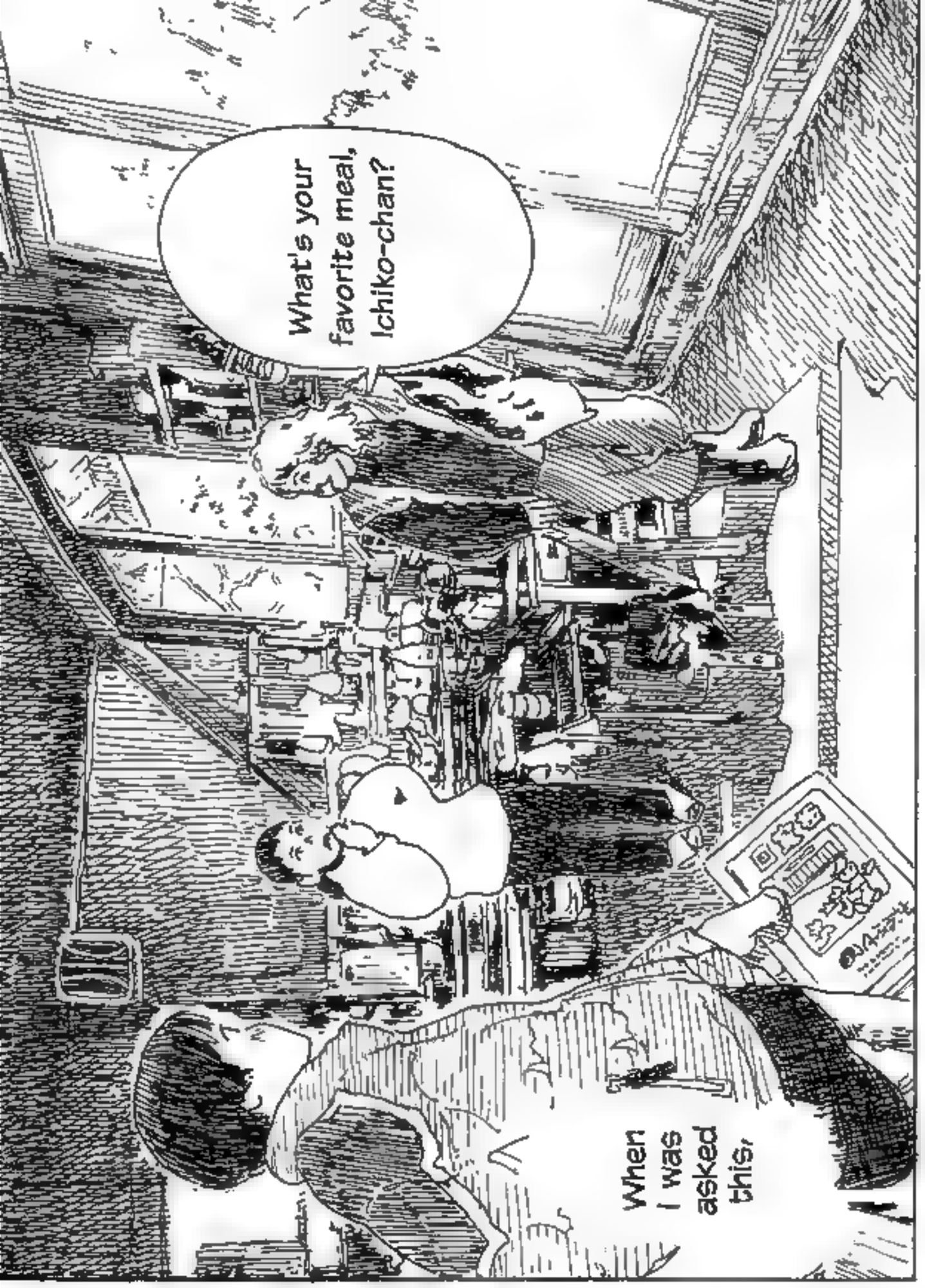
If you look up at the sky on a starry night, sometimes you can see the black silhouette of an owl gliding past without making a sound.

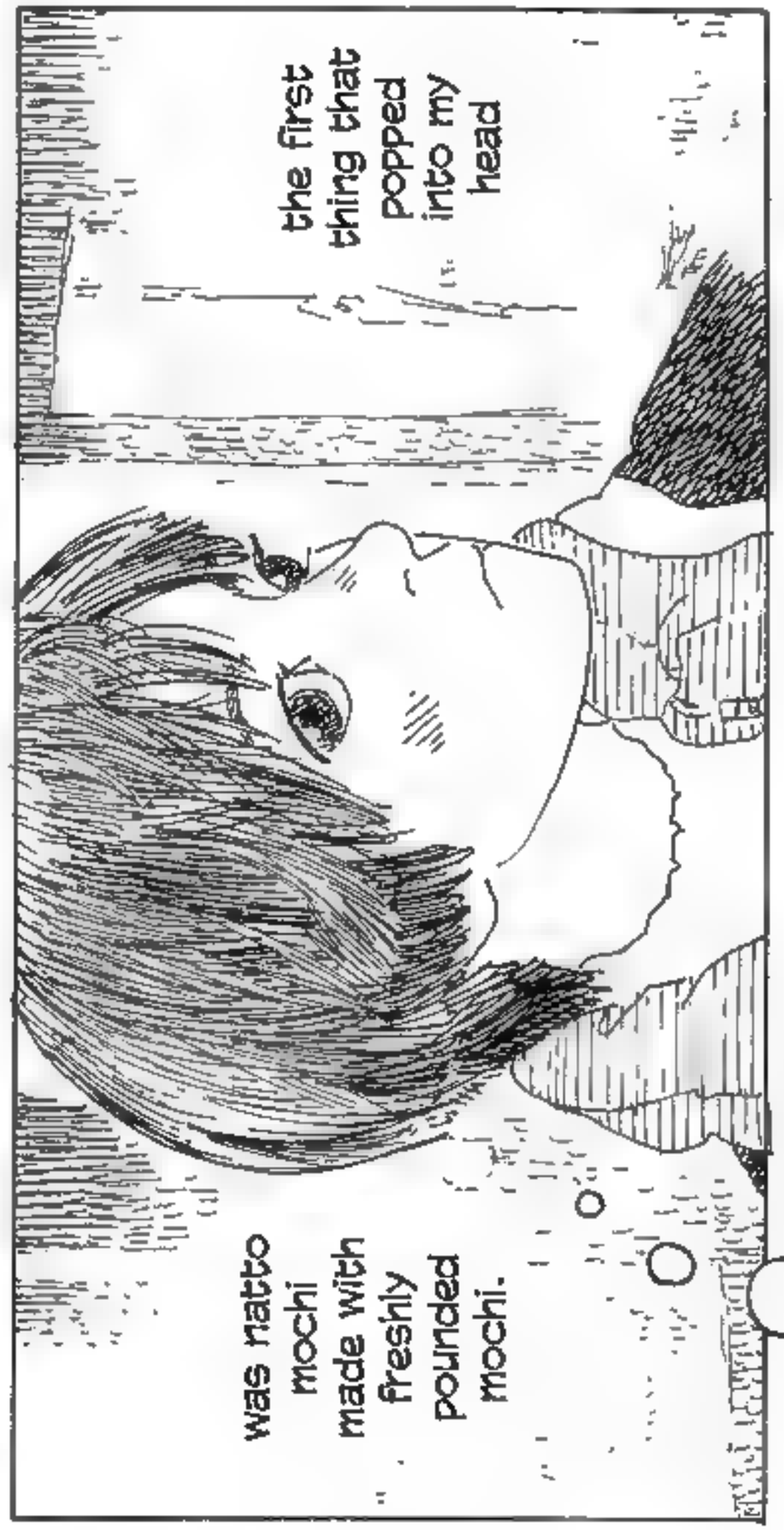
It's so quiet that it feels otherworldly, like it's the king of the darkness.

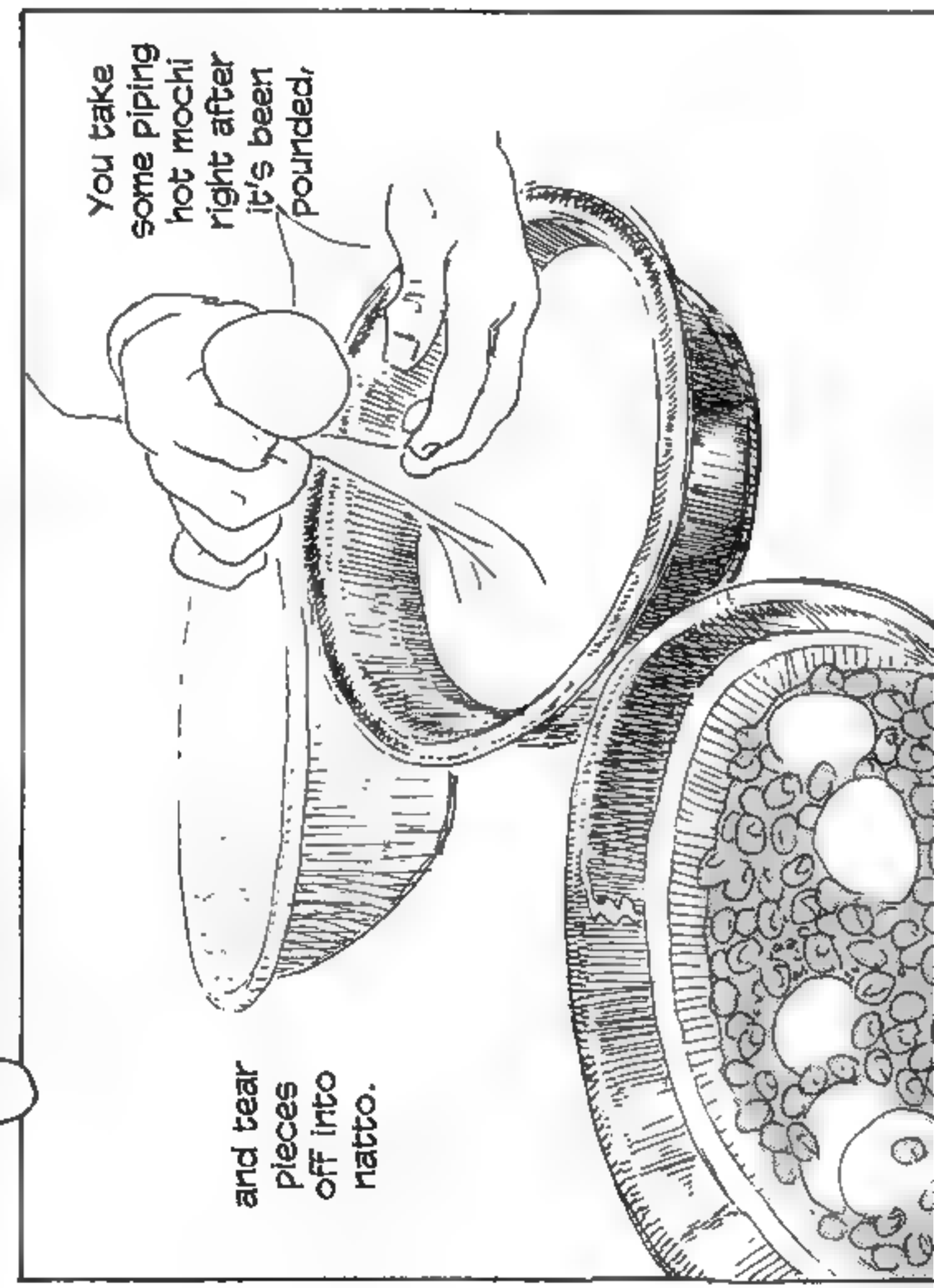
Little Forest

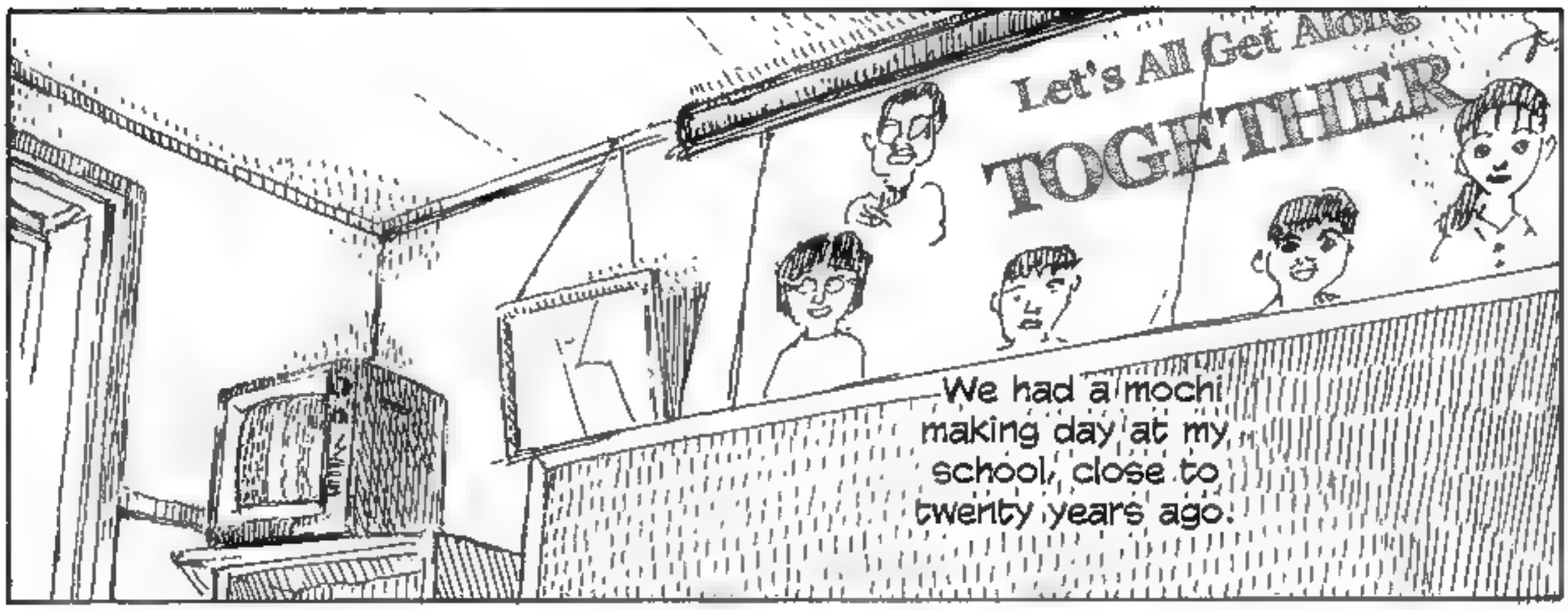
# 4th dish

## Natto Mochi

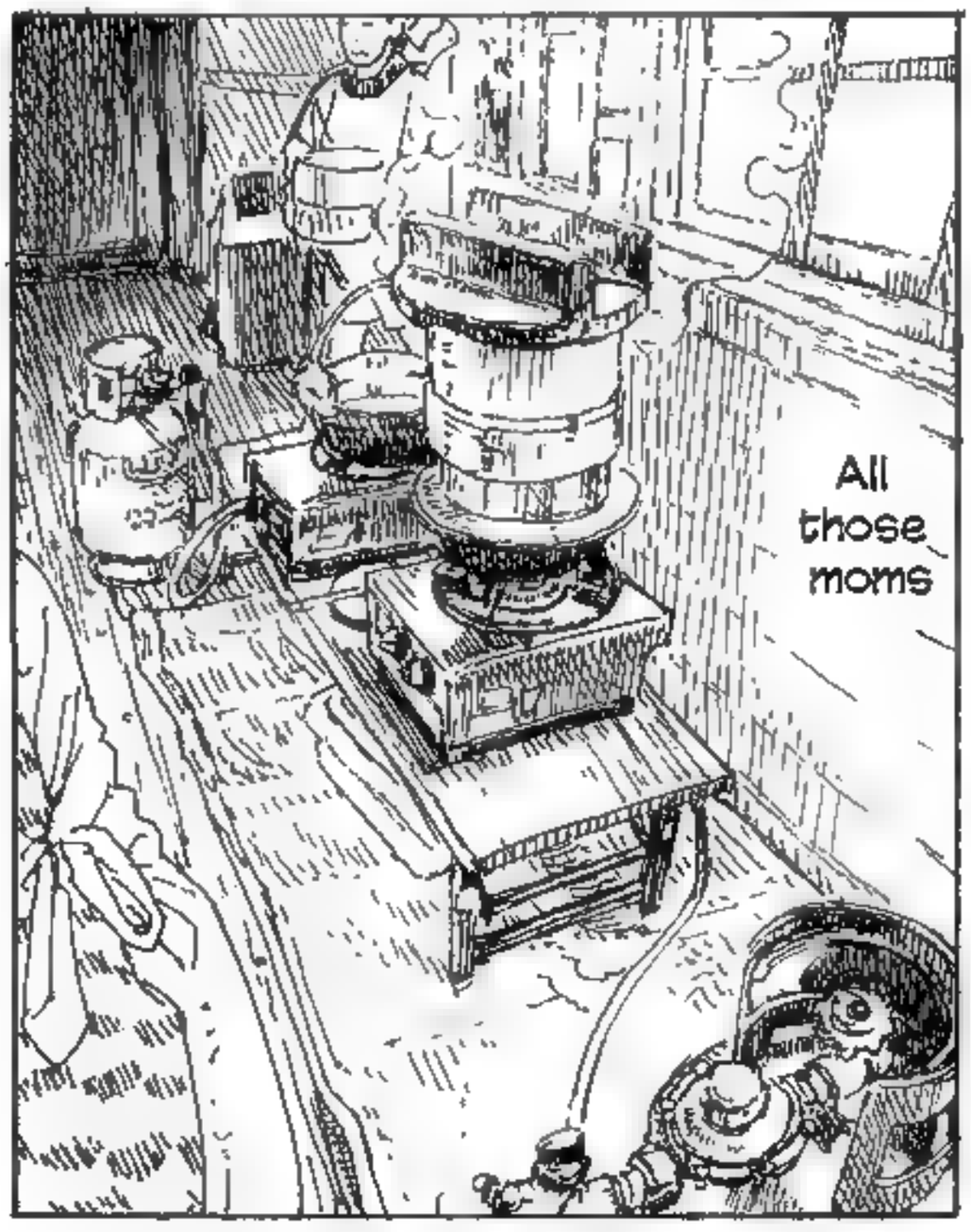


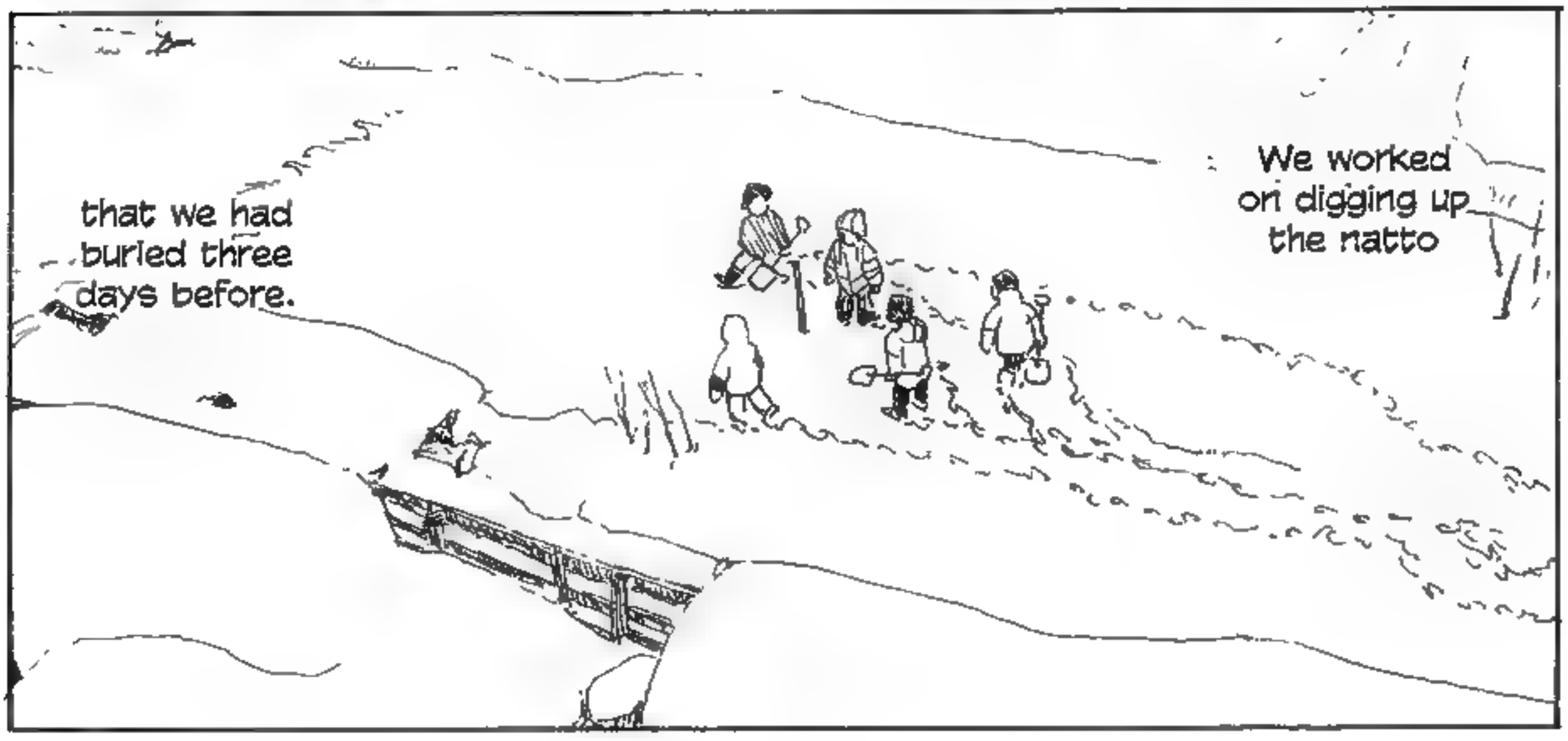



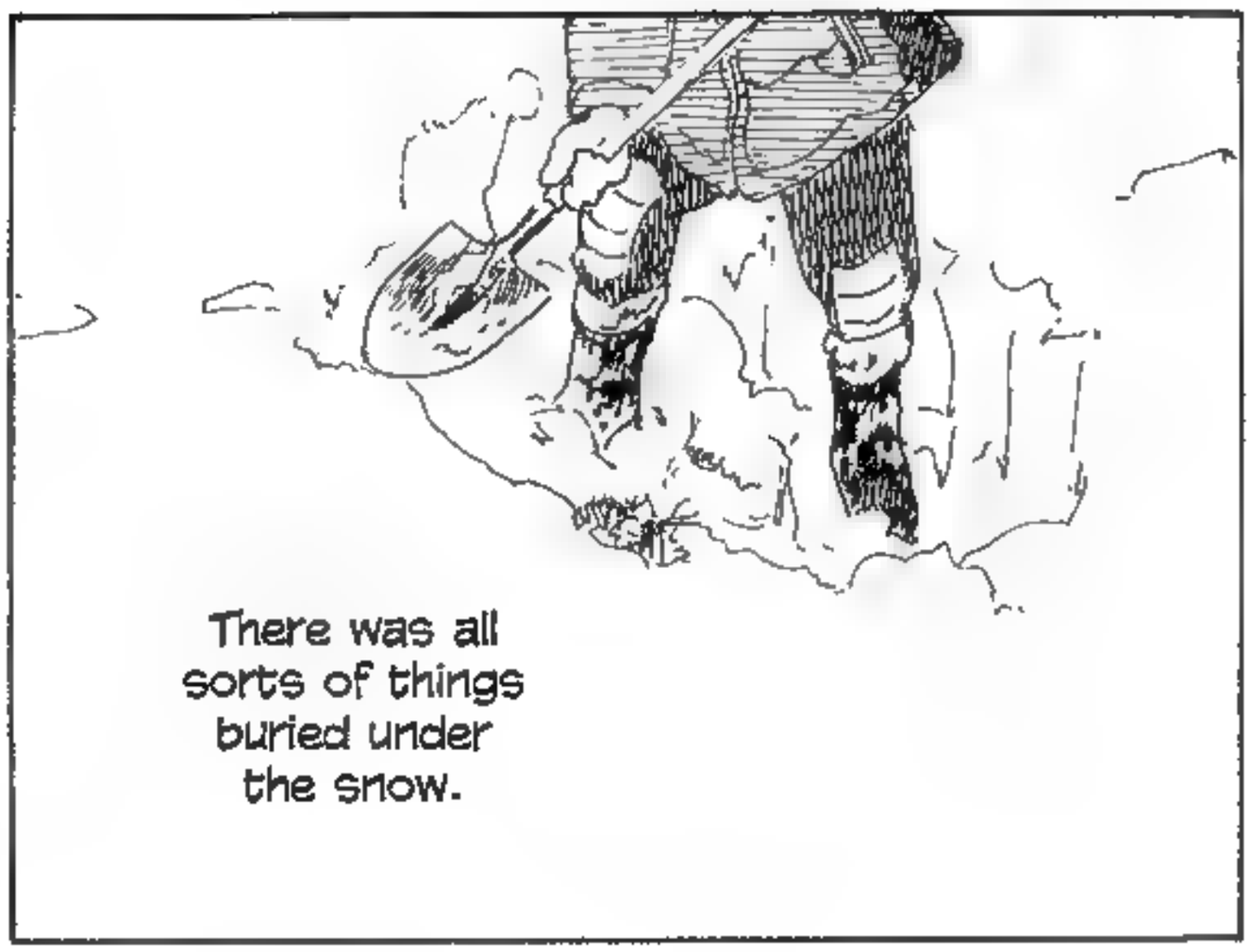

Let's All Get Along
TOGETHER
We had a mochi making day at my school, close to twenty years ago.

running back and forth all over the place.


All those moms

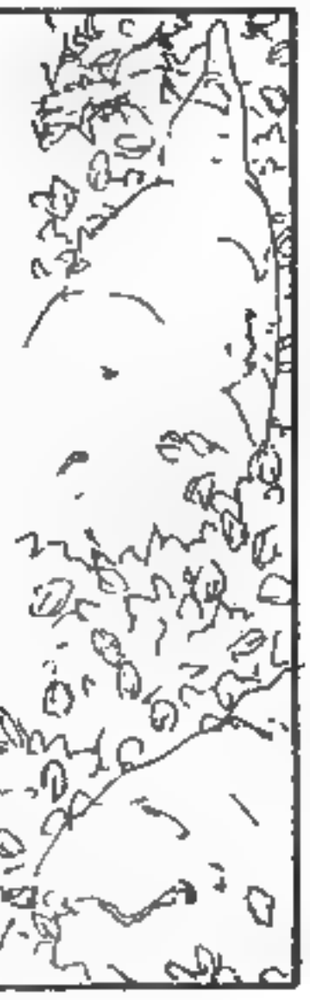

that we had buried three days before.
We worked on digging up the natto

Cabbage,



There was all sorts of things buried under the snow.

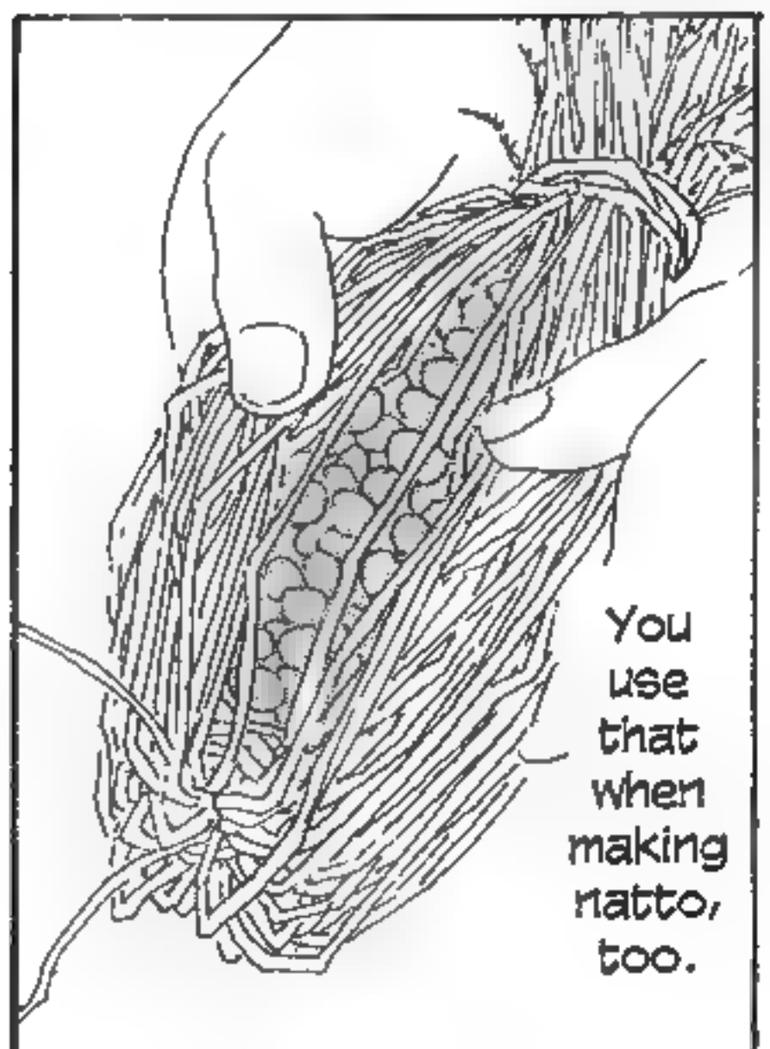
Sweet potatoes are put in with chaff so that the potatoes don't stick together.



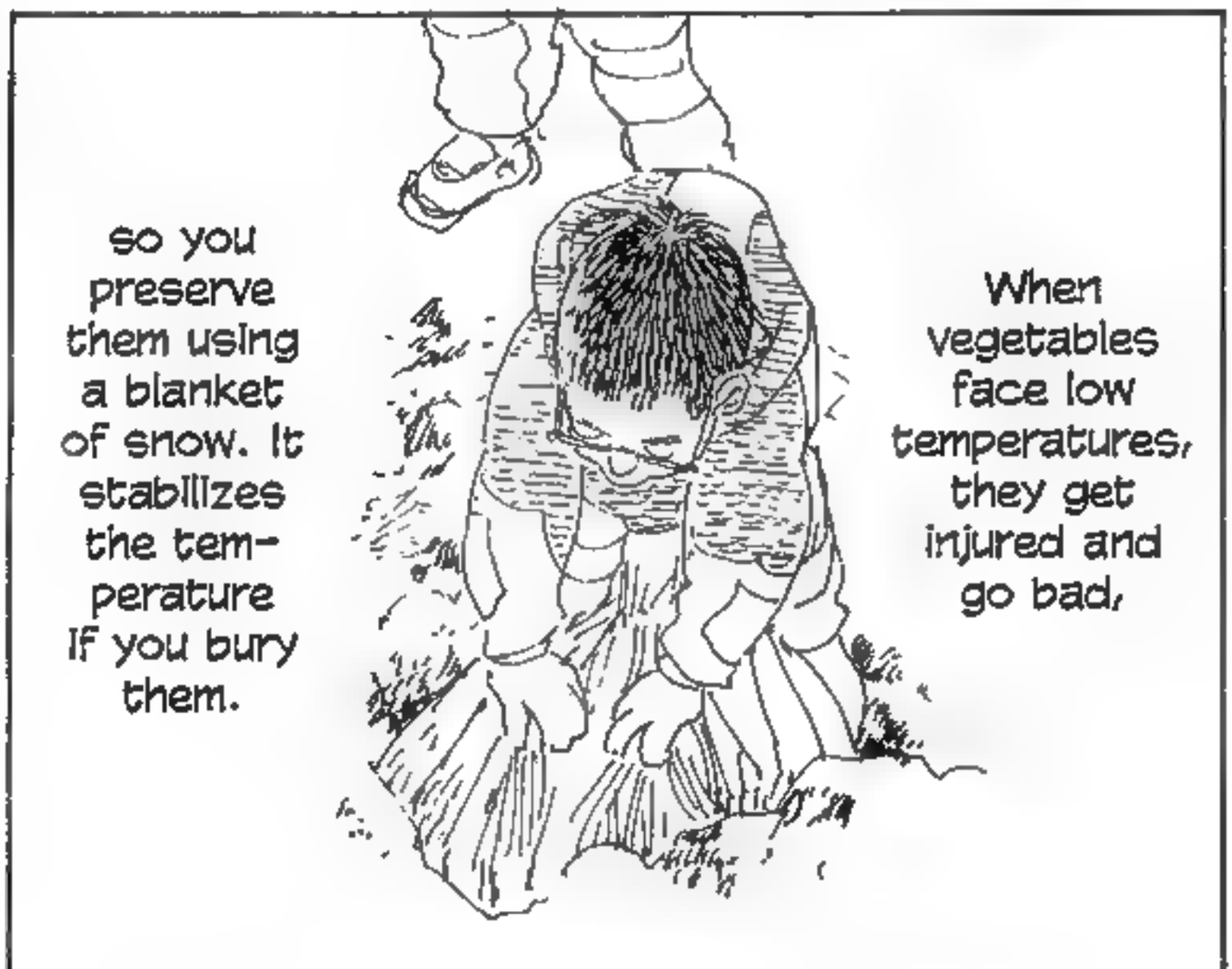
wrapped in cedar leaves to keep the mice away.

daikon and carrots in holes in the ground,

green onion, spinach,



You use that when making natto, too.



so you preserve them using a blanket of snow. It stabilizes the temperature if you bury them.

When vegetables face low temperatures, they get injured and go bad,

A cylindrical container weaved from straw. Used for making natto, among other things

If you stick a piece of straw inside at this stage, you'll get a lot of strings.

You wrap soy beans that have been boiled soft in "wara-zuto"*

comes a snow blanket.

and then on top of a straw blanket,

dig a hole in the snow,

Wrap it in a straw mat,

BAM

Look at all the strings!

Wow, it's done!

y'know.

WHAP

or else you don' get good tastin' mochi...

You gotta flip it over right,

Stir it up for me so that the mochi don' stick.

grab

patter patter

Run, Ichiko.

Okay, check the taste now.

pop

...

Go on.

Don't worry 'bout it. It's good when it's nice an' warm.

...

Huh? But...

Natto chock-full of sugar and soy sauce.

still warm, and oh-so-soft mochi.

Freshly made,

It was the first natto mochi with sugar and soy sauce that I ever ate.

I just want to keep on eating them forever and ever.

I pop 'em into my mouth one after another.

But after that,

so there wasn't really a particular flavor I could call our "family recipe".

Don't hit me!

I had never eaten natto mochi,

Before my mom started living in Komori,

Mom

Huh.

It's important to knead it before pounding.

mochi rice every year

so rice cultivation is itself "natto mochi" cultivation.

That's why we grow

The bacteria that makes natto is on rice straw,

freshly-pounded natto mochi with lots of sugar and soy sauce became our recipe.

Then there's weeding, and water control.

It's ten minutes by bike to get to the paddy field we're renting.

so I used to worry and go out to the plants everyday.

This year we had rain and low temperatures during the flowering period,

"Rice plants grow from the sound of people's footsteps."

The whole village sure was frantic during the threshing,

working during lulls in the cold rain.

swsh くぃ くぃ くぃ swsh swsh

And the product of this year's mochi-rice cultivation is now taken care of by...

...this!

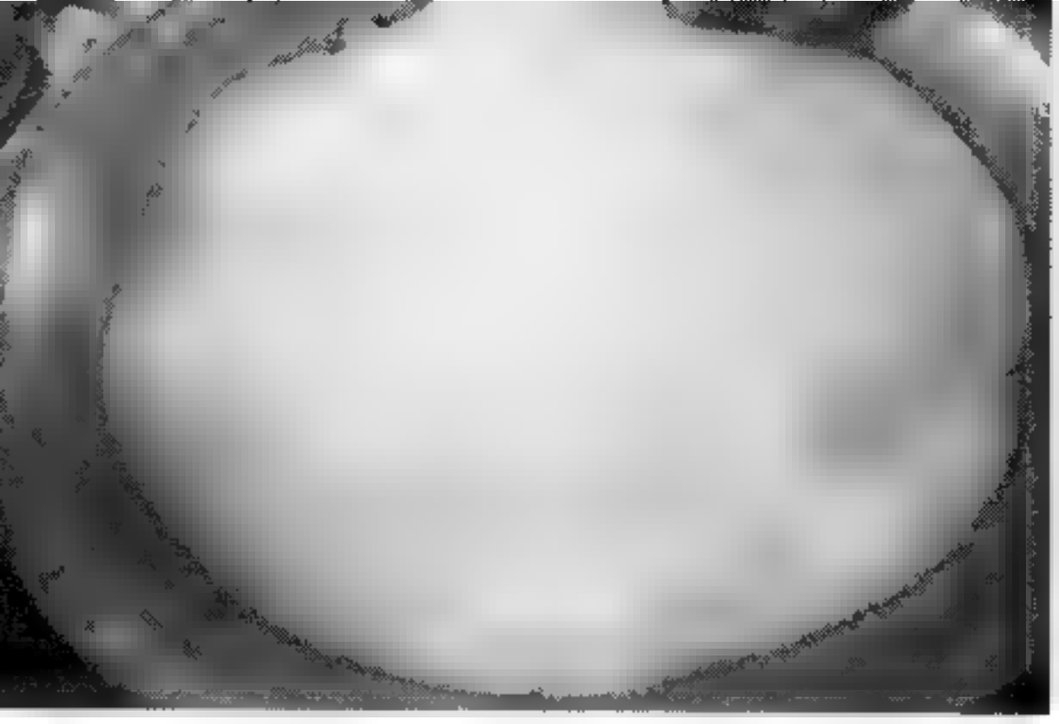
ゴトthump ゴトthump ゴトthump ゴトthump

That school is now closed. They only use the building occasionally as a community center.

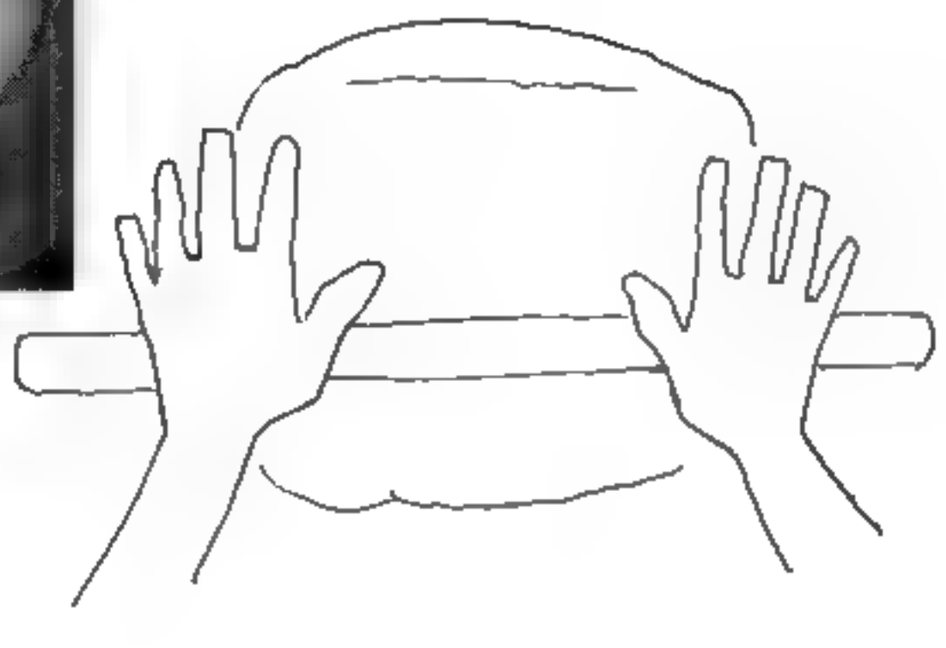
tick tick tick tick tick tick

WHOMP ゴットン WHOMP ゴットン WHOMP ゴットン WHOMP ゴットン

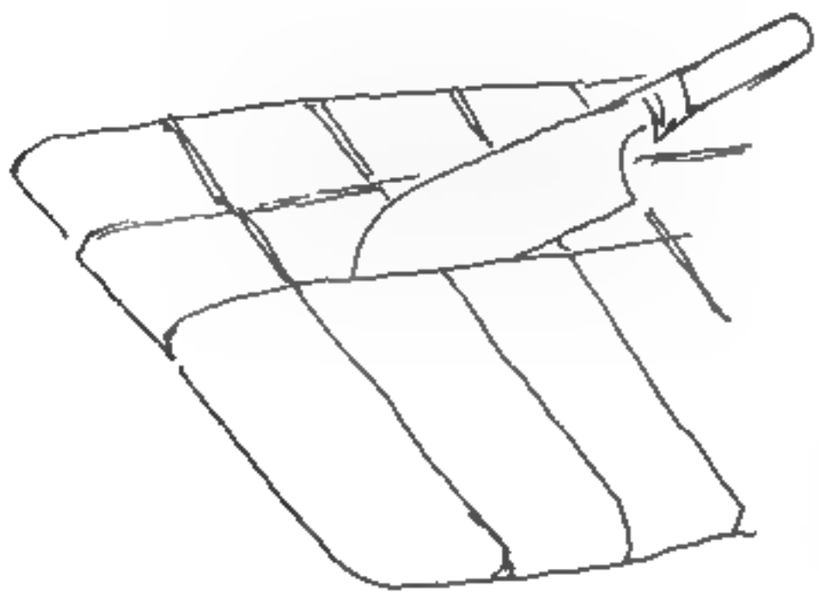
Mochi pounder



# How Mochi is Preserved in Komori



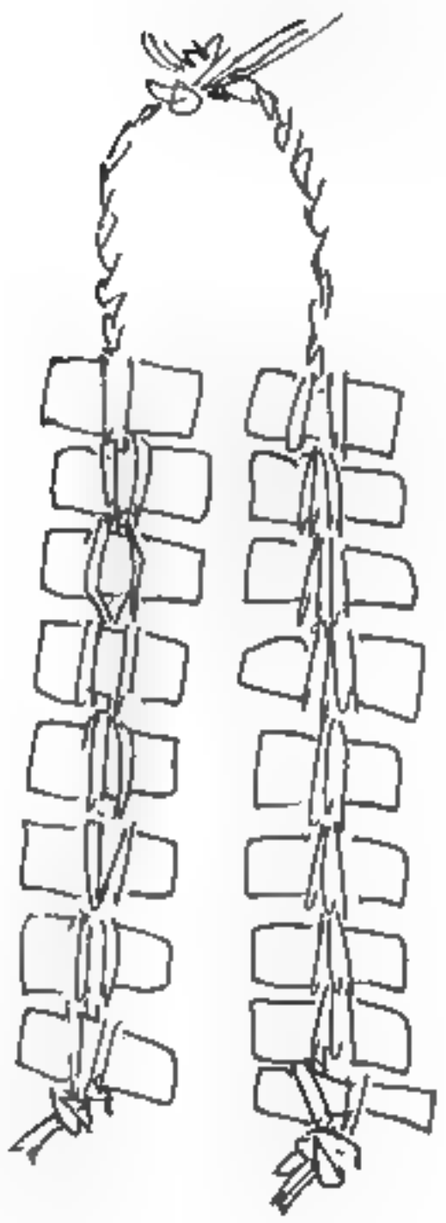
Roll some pounded mochi flat and thin.



Let it sit for a little while until it gets hard, at which point you cut it into squares.

Before cooking them, you should soak them in water for a day if they're dried, or thaw them if they're frozen, then put them in warm water until they're soft, and dress them with tare sauce.

You can bundle them together with straw and dry them out, or wrap them in vinyl and freeze them so they can last longer.

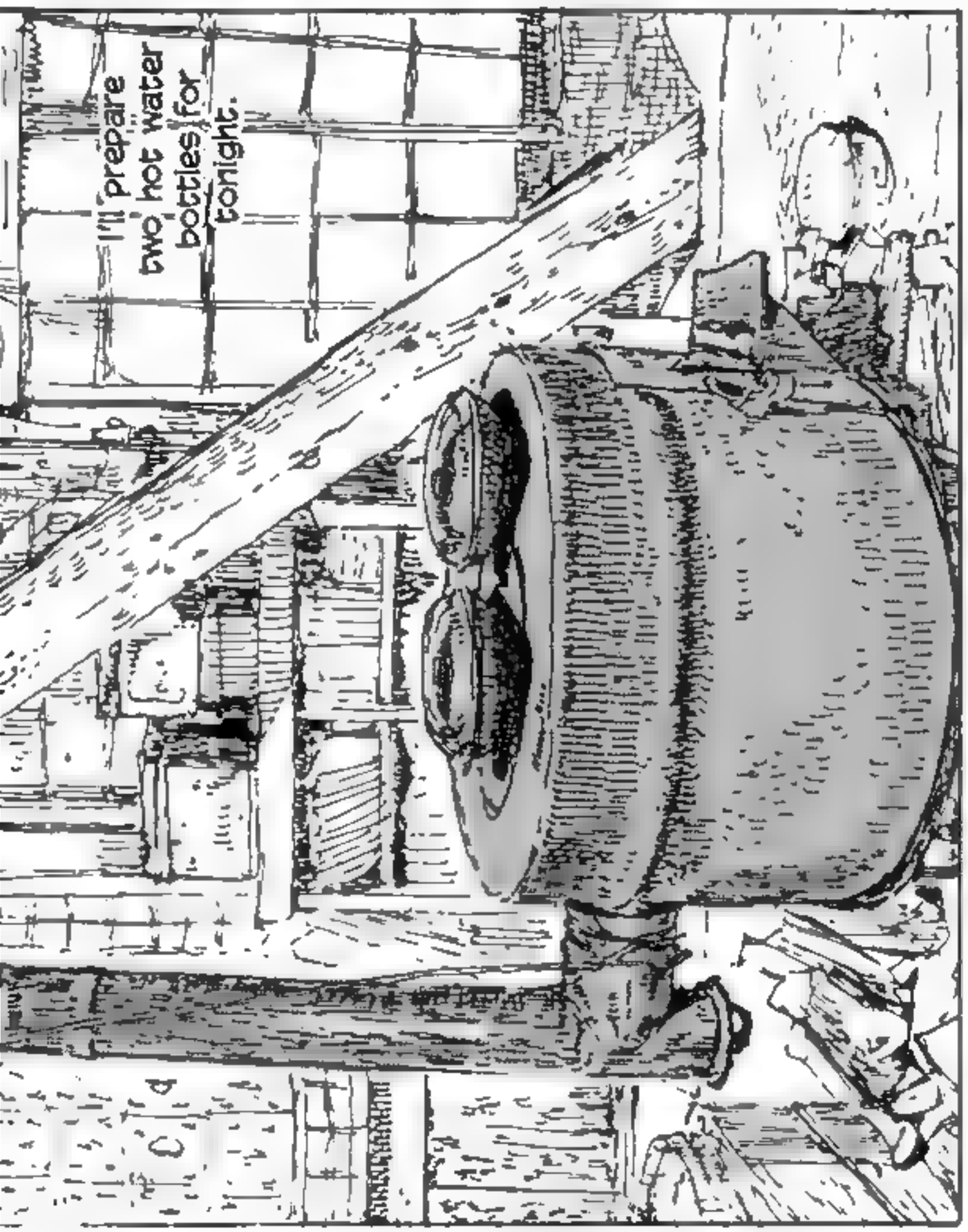


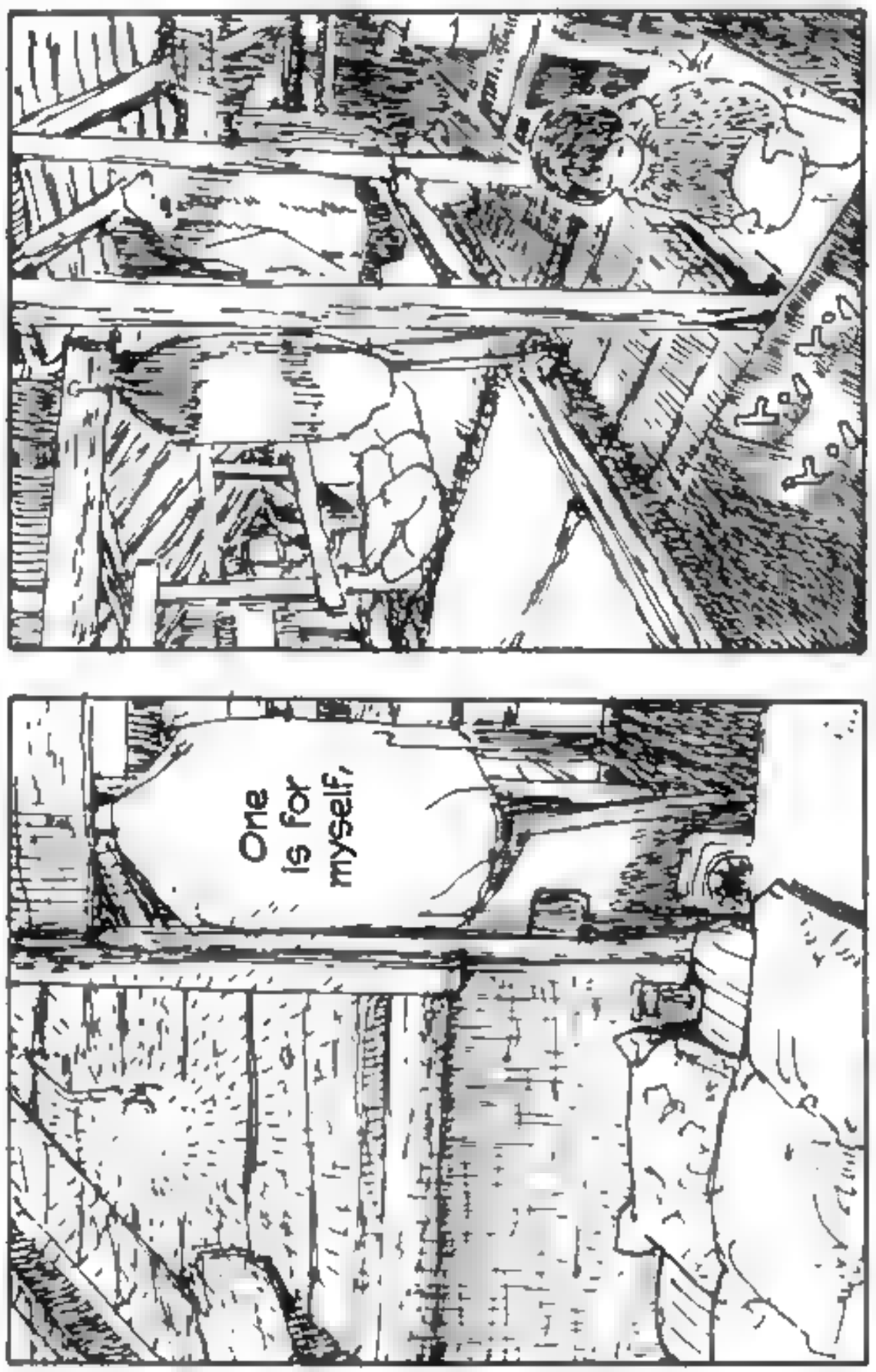
Give it a good covering with potato starch, and put them in paper candy boxes.

I wonder why it is that we always write the sound foxes make as "kon" in Japanese.

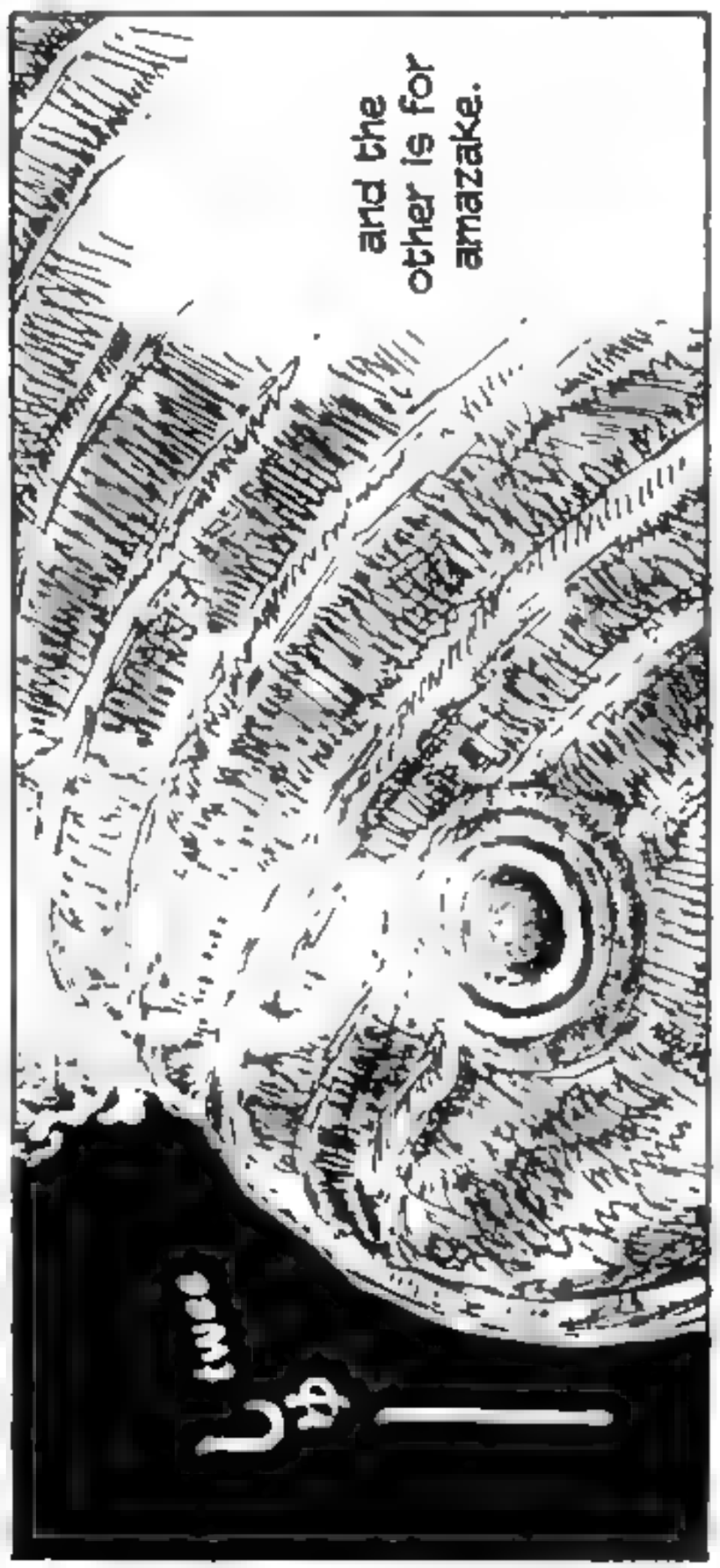
In Komori, at least, the foxes make more or less the same sound as dogs, with an occasional "gyohn".

I guess from far away it can kind of sound like "kayn", for whatever that's worth.






Little Forest

# 5th dish

Amazake

buckle down and separate the straw for hanging freeze-dried daikon or for wrapping things in,

I light the stove,

On winter nights you can't get by without amazake.

That is how these soy beans end up as natto,

while steaming these beans.

I drink amazake and keep my body warm,

and set aside the red beans and soy beans that are too small, or have been damaged by bugs.

The five of us from the women's association borrow the village's entire community center to make it.

Sorry I'm la. Wow it's so steamy!

and once a year, become miso.

We're still boiling the water

I've been eating too much mochi.

Now, haven't you gotten plump?

The soy beans and rice are both brought in and left to soak in water for one night.

I was talking about the beans not you.

the kitchens in new houses are too cramped for making miso.

Though large farm houses from by-gone days might be a different story.

It's making a cracking sound

The rice gets steamed.

We can go take a smoke

Then it's not ready yet.

The beans get boiled.

but if I put the lid back onnit I won't be able to git to it

It's not boilin' 'nough

Here, pass the tsukemono around.

Lunch time.

The nishime is really good!

Who made it?

Is this in the back?

In order to preserve the humidity and temperature,

we place it in the fermentation room.

I wish whoever put this in remembered about it

We let the rice cool down a little after it's finished steaming, and we mix in the koji fungi.

I thought so

Yep

Are these tea leaves from here?

Smoke (break time).

I shape them into mounds,

I hear you can put this in miso ramen and it tastes really yummy.

Oh...?

I wonder if you can make udon with this machine?

we put it through the mincer,

When the soy beans are soft enough to crush with your ring finger,

How-zit?

Take a bite

and put it back in the room again.

We mix the fungi in, add more water,

I'm just doing like I was taught to

I can do just fine without that.

If you don't make it like dis it ain't gon' turn out good.

and leave them to cool.

The next day

We roast the beans that the people who couldn't come ask us to cook for them, put it through the mincer and shape them into mounds...

Lunch.

Yay

One mouthful per person!

I brought some miso ramen so everyone can try some

Smoke.

Chop

Your back must be aching

Mix the koji with salt.

Nah, she's still young

Mhm... It's sweet Give it a taste

Look at how nice it looks

Now is the time to make sure you remember to prepare a small amount of koji fungi.

The last day.

while adjusting the amount of moisture.

This feels like actual hamburger meat

Mix it up really, really well

and mix them with koji again.

Can't we do something with these?

We crush the bean mounds,

like dengaku style

What if we put some miso on it and bake it?

You did a good job, you must be tired.

Don't forget to stand up for yourself.

You're the one who's the most fussy of us all.

Your ears are probably tired from hearing all that bickering, right, Ichiko-chan?

That's it for the preparations.

Ahh, what a day

Cover it with a layer of salt.

Tie it so it's airtight and weigh it down.

We start using it after a year has passed.

What we're eating now is the portion we made last year!

Pack it in tight so air doesn't get into it.

Annh, my back's starting to hurt

CLENCH

CLENCH

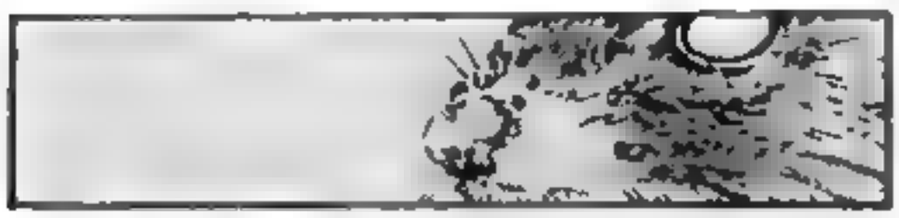
Don't use too much power and knock it over

tmp

Thank you for the food

A night with a full moon.

It's as bright as if it were midday.



It's going to get colder...

The parts of the squash that were still edible wouldn't soften properly if stewed.

Snap

The sweet potato that I had stored completely froze through and went bad.

It looked like a sponge.

Keep it warm overnight in a cardboard box with some floor cushions, blankets, and some hot water bottles.

Now mix in the miso koji.

Heat up some rice porridge and let it cool off.

until you're able to draw three semi-circles with your pinky.

*I should go and prepare some amazake ...*

Carefully heat it up,

If you don't boil it after you get it to taste to your liking, it'll continue fermenting and become sour.

By the afternoon, it'll be proper amazake.

The next morning it'll have cooled down, so warm it up again to get the koji going.

Mmm, just a little longer

It's sweet and warm and just relaxes your body.

Ahh hhh hh h

and serve it with some pickled cucumbers or other pickled greens.

Amazake made with rich mochi rice...

I make amazake with mochi rice.

Kikko, I made some for you!

When it gets really really cold,

Look who's talking.

Yada yada

Wow, take a look at your face, it's horrible!

relaxes your muscles too much.

howa

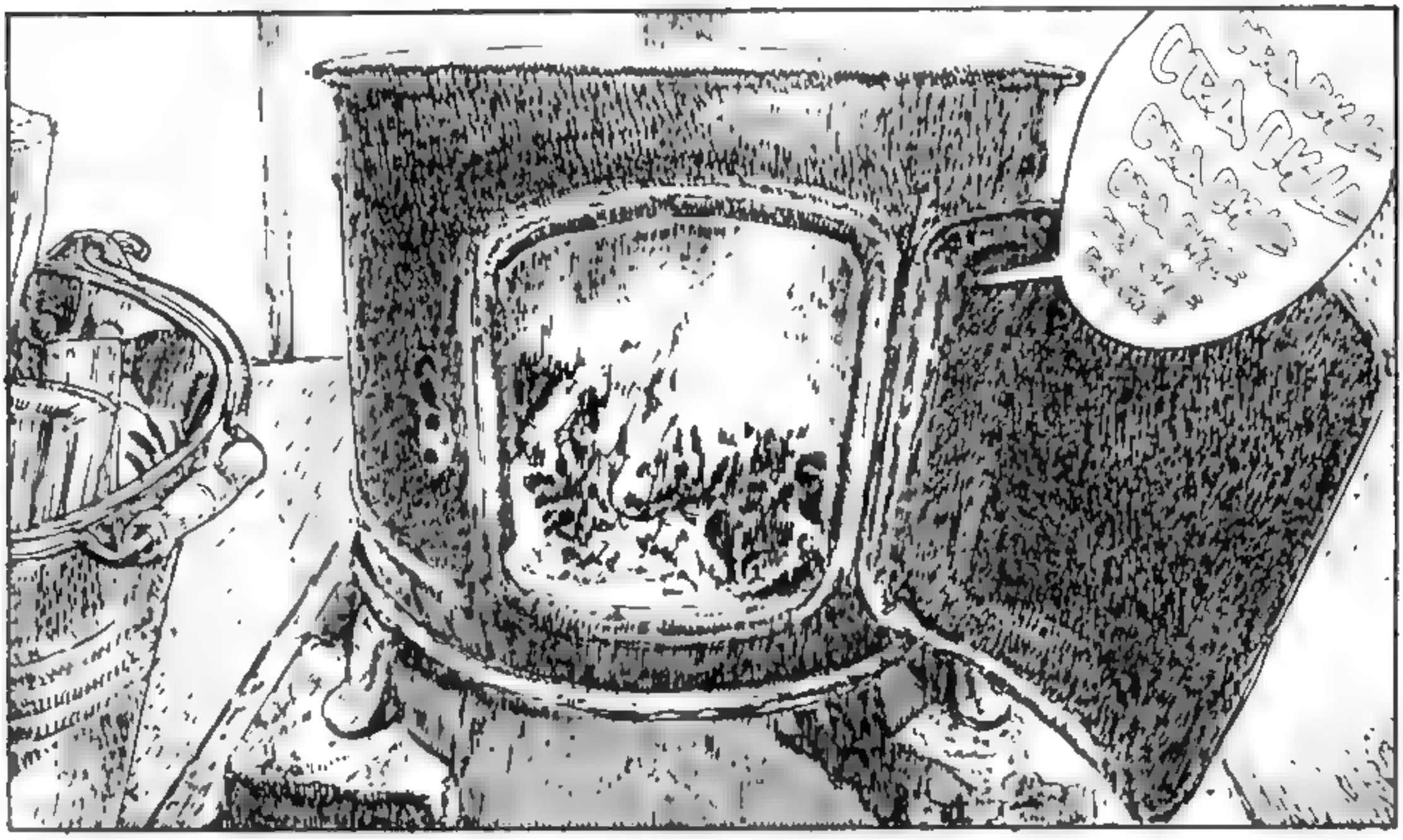
The days where it's below freezing last for about a week, even if the sun is out.

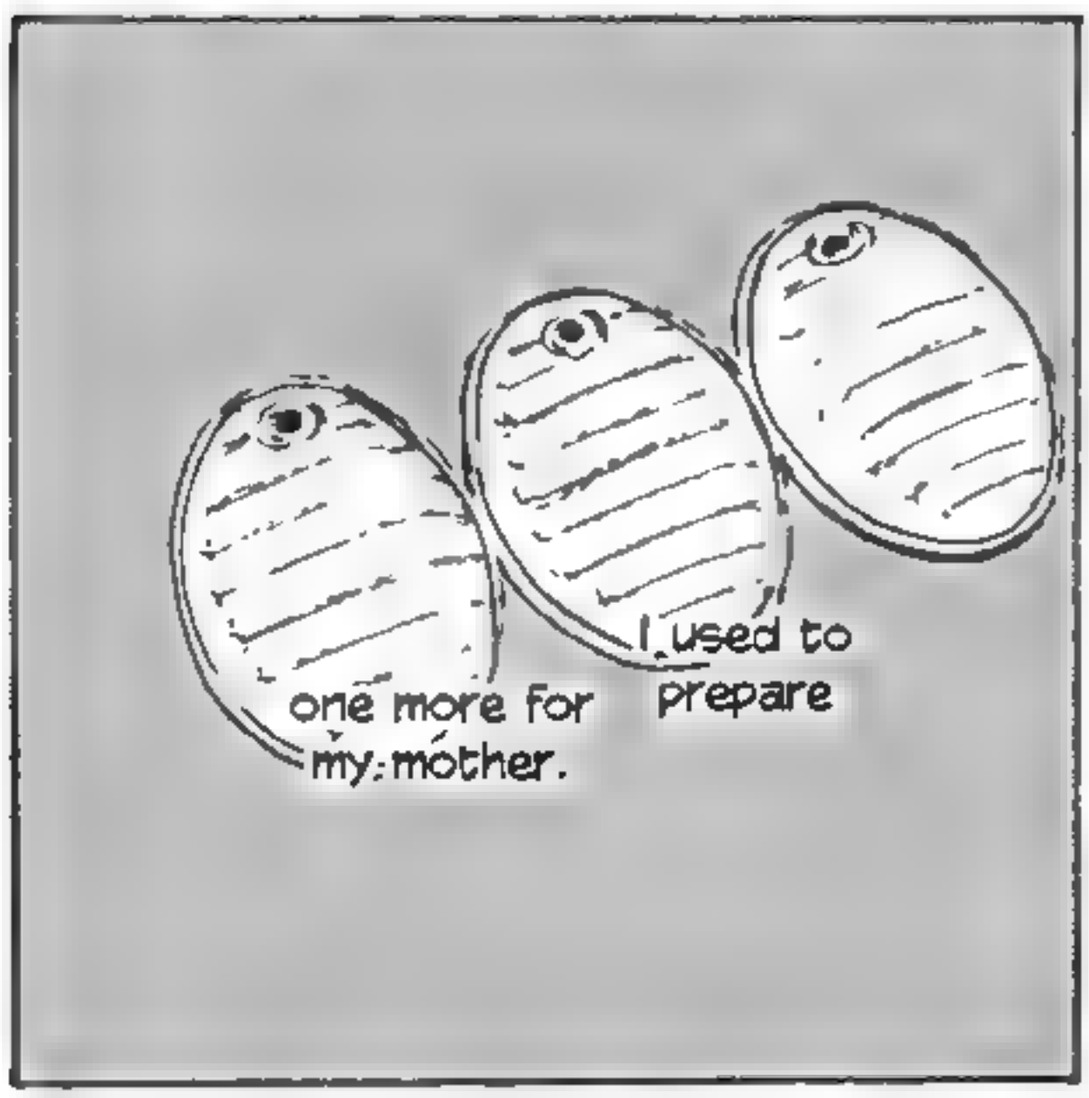
These past few days I've left the water running, even through the afternoon, to prevent it from freezing up.

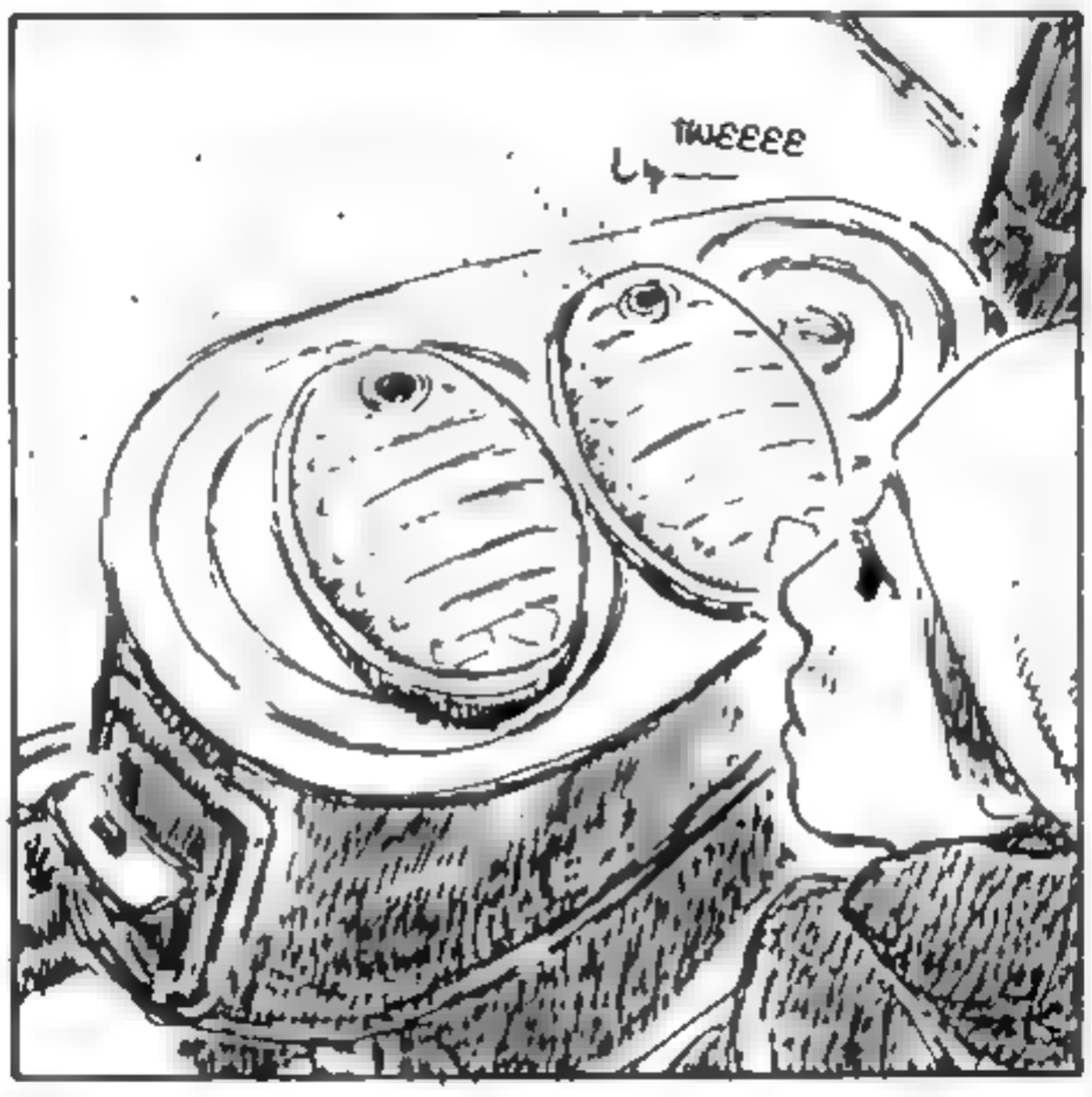
Just a little bit longer.

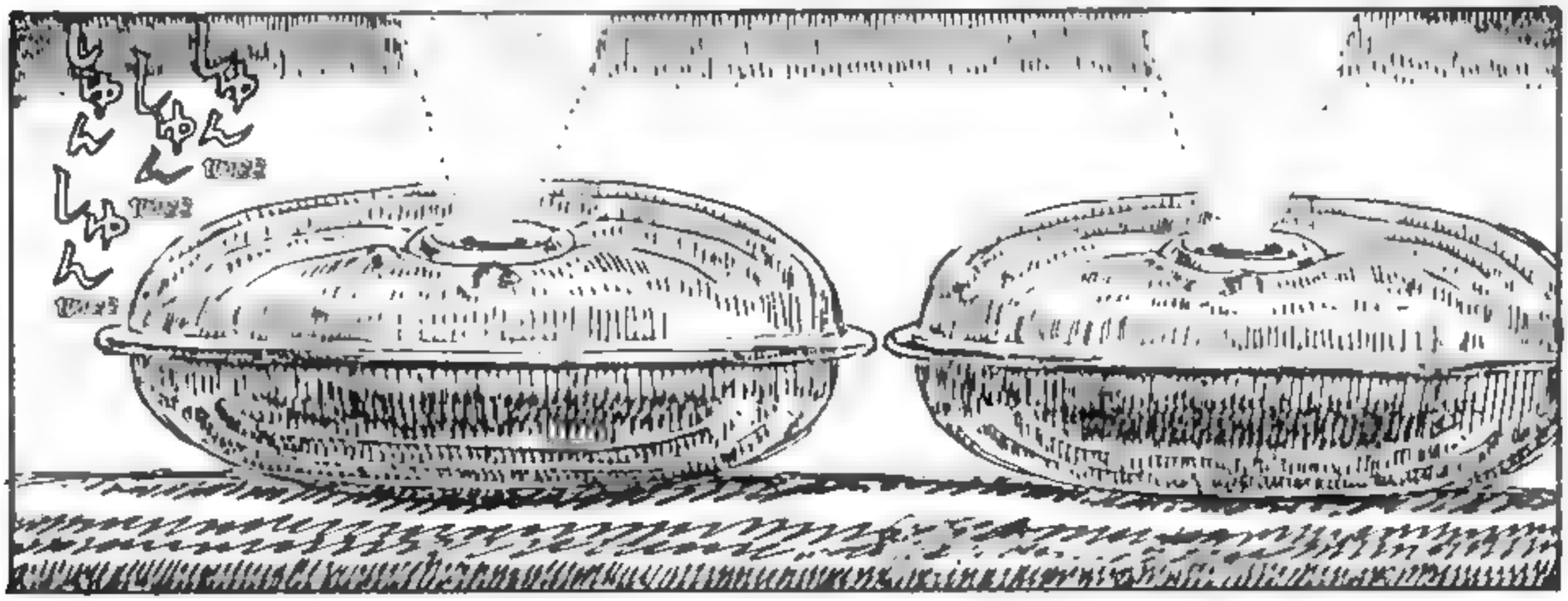
7 days later

And then, spring finally rolls around.





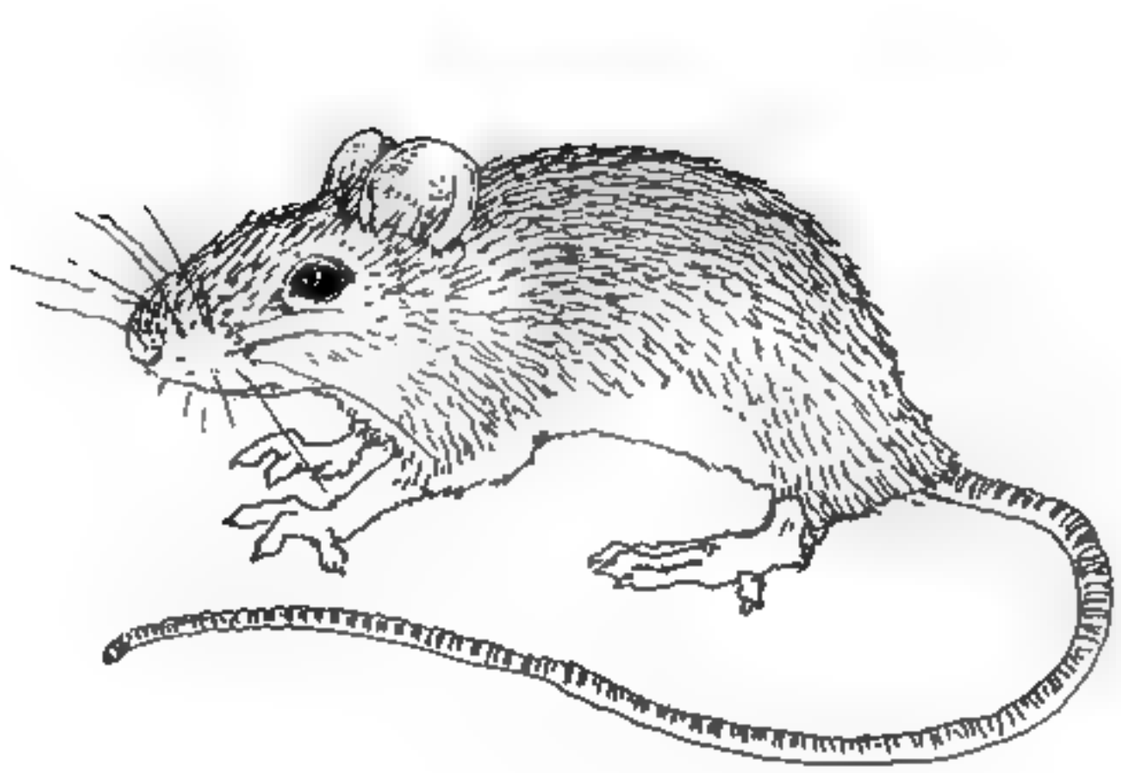


5th dish Amazake END

The seven herbs I put in my nanakusagayu.

It's handy to make amazake
(sweet sake) in an enamel pickling container.
It can be put straight onto the heat, so
you can cook the rice gruel directly and then
add in the koji (rice malt) once that cools.
The more koji you add, the sweeter and
more satisfying the amazake will become.
Amazake made with equal parts rice and
koji is especially delicious. I try to let it
ferment until the very last second before
it starts to turn sour.

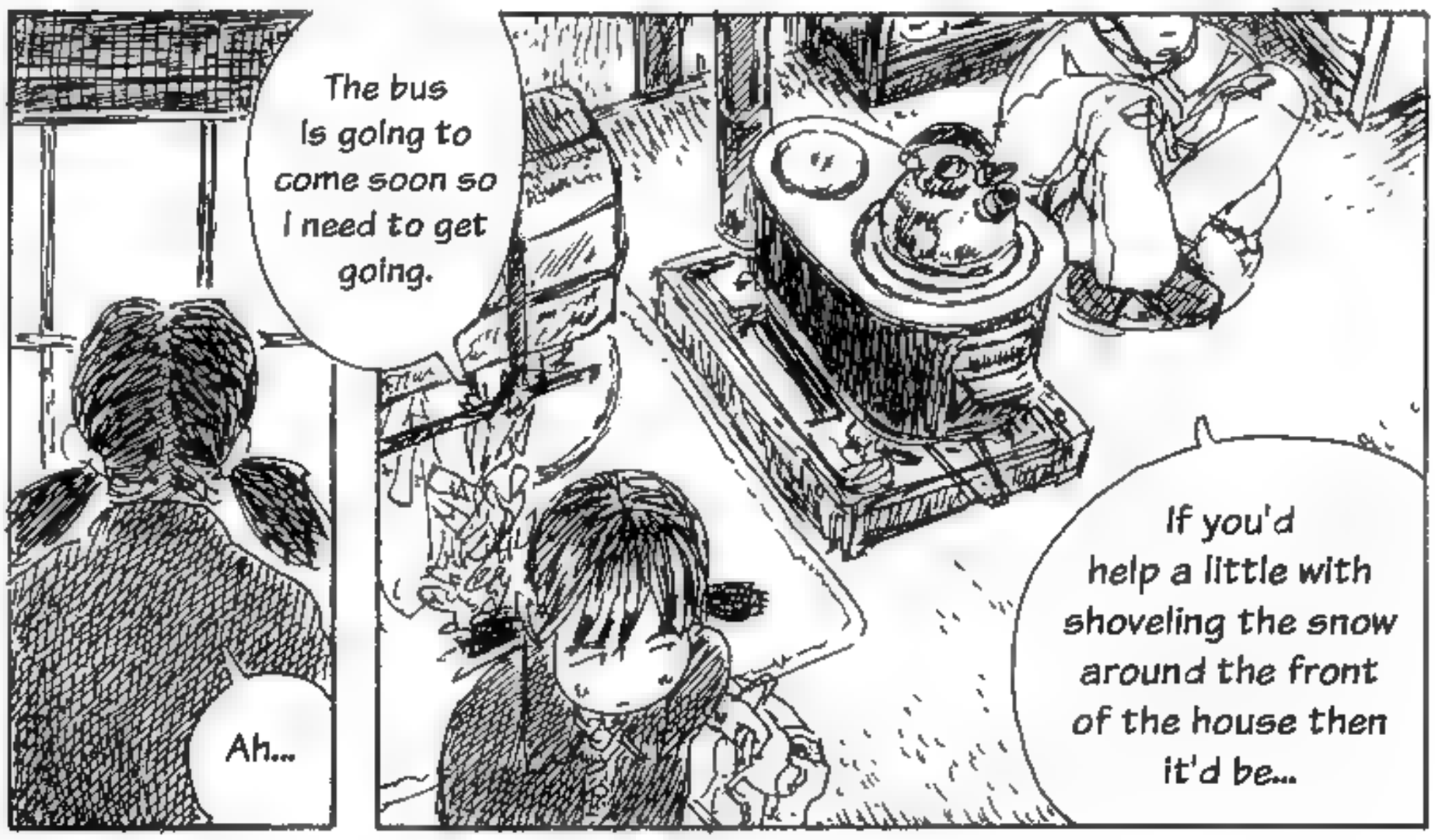
The types of mice my cat kills are quite varied, and it even comes back with moles. I admire the sheer diversity of living creatures that exist, even around my own home.



Little Forest

# 6th dish

Bakke (Butterbur Sprouts)


The bus is going to come soon so I need to get going.
Ah...
If you'd help a little with shoveling the snow around the front of the house then it'd be...

Could you pick some bakke for me? That's all I need you to do.

Okay, see you later!

I told Kikko that I'd make some bakke miso for her.

It snowed today, so you're off from work in the mountains, right, mom?

Oh, the Bakke might be hidden by the snow.

I've got to shovel all the snow off the road...

Oh well.

Do you have any idea of how long that's going to take?

But it's almost spring.

It'll be the last time it snows for a while.

I don't think it's ever snowed in May before.

It has!

It's been snowing since last night.

Mornin'!

It's crazy!

I can't believe how much has piled up!

pluck ぱつ

pluck ぱつ

pluck

BUBBLE BUBBLE

SHAA SHAA

CHOP CHOP

mirin...

and sugar.

Miso,

I'm home ...

Mom?

Hmm? The lights aren't on.

Not enough sugar.

Oh, the bakke miso's ready.

With that, my mother had disappeared.

Maybe she had to go to a meeting... or something...

C'mon Ichiko, stop lumberin' about! Take yer work seriously!

Oh, I bet that...

It's cause she's just a young'un.

C'mon, move those feet.

When you get home, the house is probably all warm,

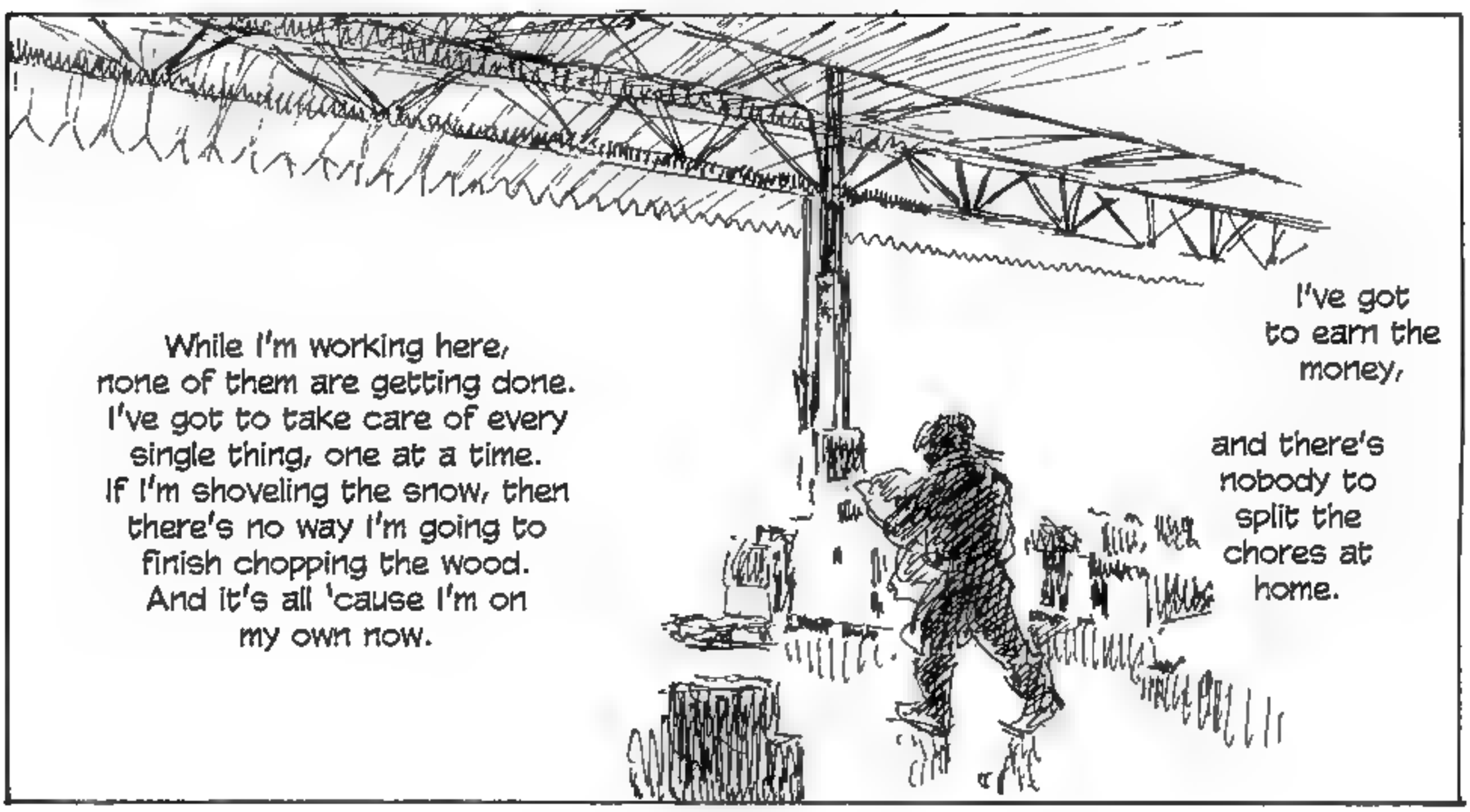
you leave all the housework to your wife, don't you?

all that's left for you to do is talk about how it's been a long day at work.

dinner's already waiting on the table, and

Well, I've got to do it all by myself no matter how tired I am.

If the laundry's piling up all you probably do is complain.



While I'm working here, none of them are getting done. I've got to take care of every single thing, one at a time. If I'm shoveling the snow, then there's no way I'm going to finish chopping the wood. And it's all 'cause I'm on my own now.

I've got to earn the money,

and there's nobody to split the chores at home.

I've gotta do everything by myself here.

Don't act all high and mighty tellin' other people to work harder when you make your family do whatever you don't wanna do.

You have no idea how difficult it is to not have a family around to help split the work...

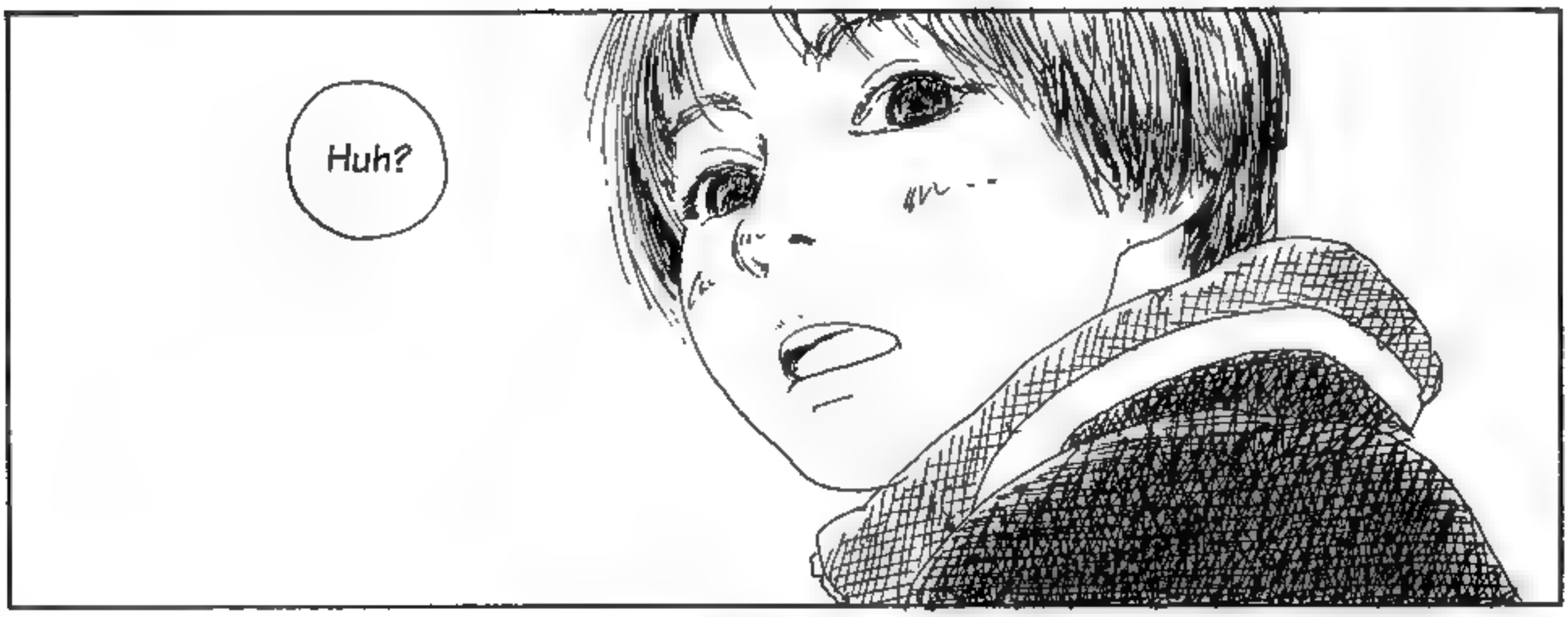
There's no way you people would ever understand how much effort it takes when you've been so pampered by your families.

I-chi-ko?

really consider me... family...?

Did she

Mom?


Huh?

You've got to be down here to see them.
See, here they are.

There are so many of them here.

Bakke.

pop

Is this your third bowl, Kikko?

Yeah, it's so good that it's dangerous!

Yeah, my third one.

You just can't stop yourself when it comes to bakke miso.

You know, my mom...

You can live off of it forever.

I heard that bakke miso will keep for around a year if you put it in the fridge.

pour some hot water in it, and call it "miso soup".

she would put bakke miso in a soup bowl,

when she didn't have time,

Ahaha...

You got some hot water?

Yeah, it's pretty good.

...

That sounds... pretty good.

Nah, let's try it plain first.

Want to put some green onions and seaweed in it?

6th dish Bakke (Butterbur Sprouts) END

As far as bakke miso goes, it tastes even better if you let its full flavor develop by mixing it together with miso after stir-frying the blanched bakke in some oil. The amount of bakke to miso you use is pretty much up to you, and even if you don't use that much bakke, if you keep it around for a couple of months after you make it, the flavor will start to seep into the miso, making it very tasty.

Little Forest
小森の住人たち 6

There was this Japanese marten that was sniffing around in the middle of some butterbur flowers, along one of the ridges between a rice paddy where the snow had thawed. I thought maybe it was munching on some bakke, but it was probably looking around for some bugs. The color of its body was this vibrant orange that really stuck out.

Little Forest

# 夏・イネ・下ごしらえ

## 7th dish

Horsetail

If I left this little guy here I'd have a whole huge field of 'em in no time.

This is a horsetail root.

meow

I've got to prepare the paddies, but there are so many roots around.

but I'm in a pretty big rush, you know.

Well, I might look like I'm goofing off,

Where'd you come from?

You're an unfamiliar face.

Till the soil... and pull out the roots.

Phew.

Till the soil and pull out the roots.

Author Note- One of the species of edible plants that grow in the wild. Kogomi are sprouts of the ostrich fern (kusanteitsu).

Could you take care of sowing the seeds again this year?

Oh, you didn't have to do that.

Here are some kogomi I took from the back.

We remove and plant the sprouts that grow from the rice.

Okay, good.

Then we soak it in spring water for about ten days.

The salt content should be about one part salt, thirteen parts water, enough for a raw egg to float.

Okay, let's review.

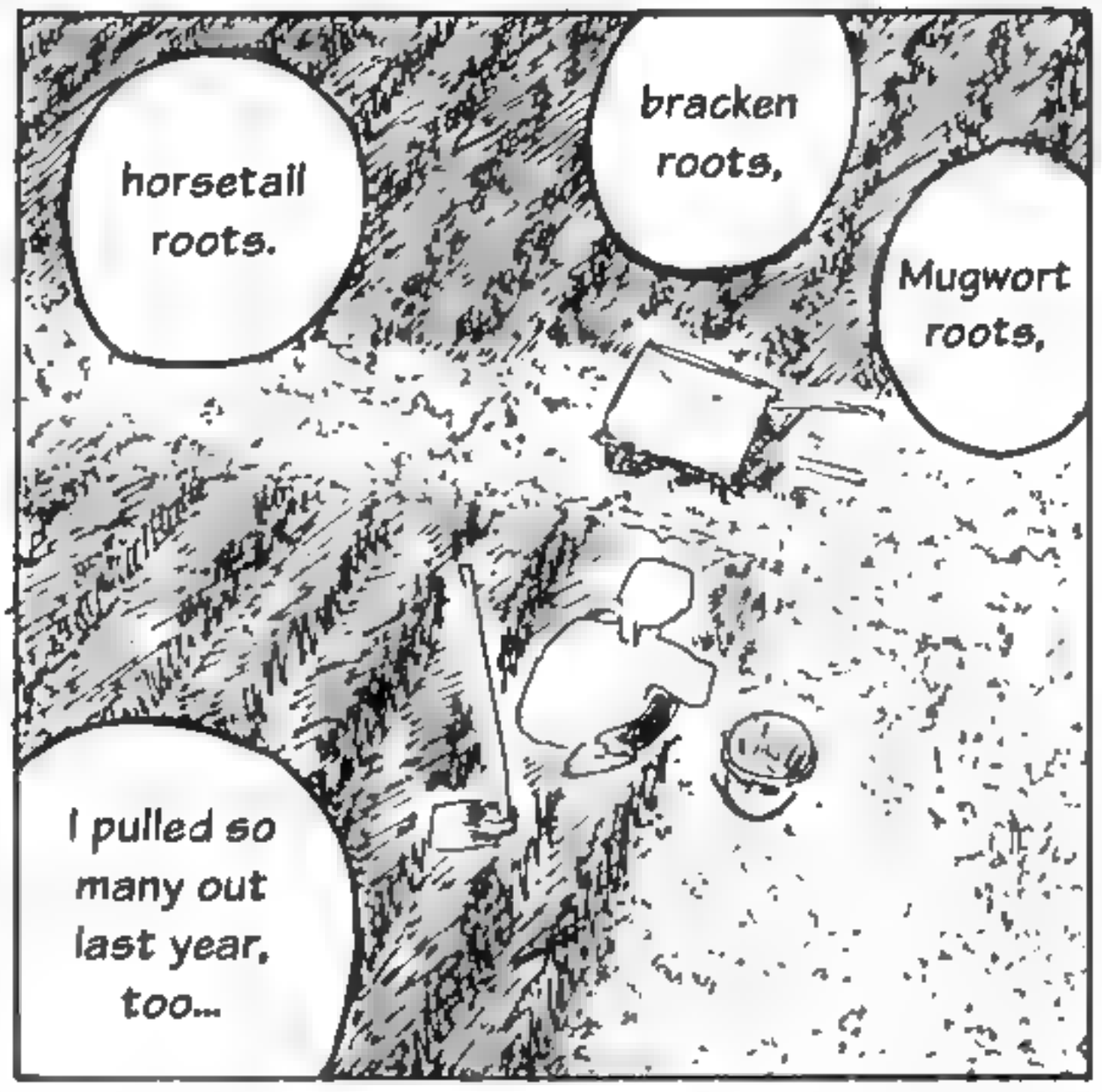
And after that, we rinse the salt off the rice.

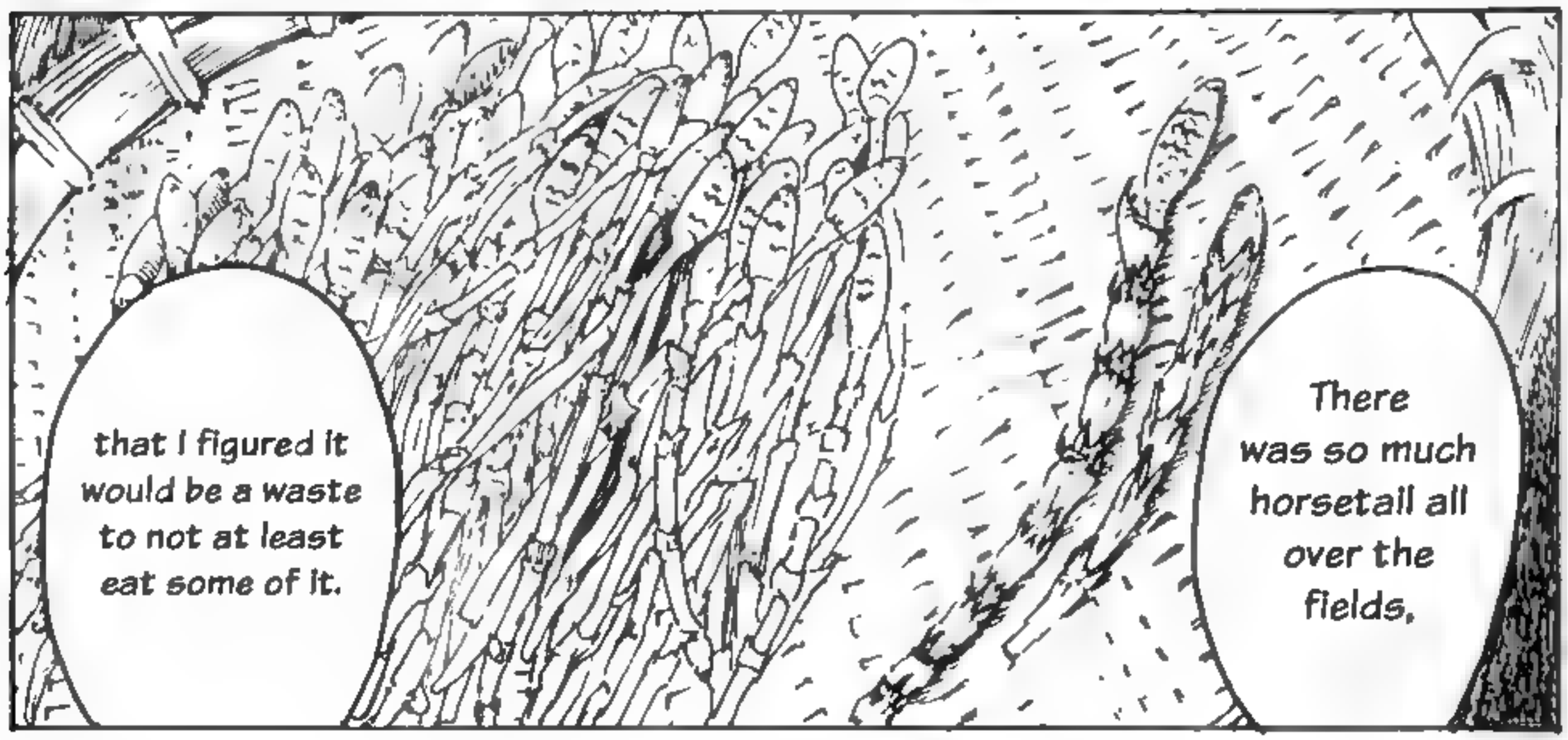
We place the unhulled rice grains in strong brine and take out the grains that come floating up.

Have the plots dried out?

I'm gonna start from the parts that are already dry.

Till the soil,
pull out the roots.


horsetail roots.
bracken roots,
Mugwort roots,
I pulled so many out last year, too...


that I figured it would be a waste to not at least eat some of it.
There was so much horsetail all over the fields,

You have to take off all these tiny parts little by little.

PEEL PEEL PEEL PEEL

When you've got a huge pile of them,

taking off the husk one by one is such a chore.

Even worse, your finger tips end up all black.

But if you don't take them off they'd end up in your mouth when you eat them.

It takes all this time and your shoulders even start aching.

PEEL PEEL PEEL PEEL

SSSSS

fwap fwap fwap fwap

So then you boil 'em.

so this is all you get from that big heap of horsetails.

It shrinks in volume,

ぐつぐつ ぐつぐつ

And make tsukudani by simmering them in soy sauce and mirin.

And, also,

...

You spend all that time and work,

but this is all you end up with!

like, you're already this busy and you spend so much of your precious time and effort on it,

and this is what you've accom-plished.

It really isn't like self-satisfying enough, or something...

even though you've put so much effort into it,

horsetail tsukudani.

but have some of it-

it's a dish that is really a waste of work,

It's so.... extravagant.

Well, you might say that, but...

The roots are so small that you just can't pull 'em all out.

When the fields are overgrown with them, no matter how many you pluck out, and how much you try, there's no getting rid of them.

Horsetails really are just weeds after all.

like in the Jomon period,

And in the past...

We opened up these forests.

we were the ones that created this environment that these horsetails grow so easily in.

T/L Note: The Jomon period is the time in Japanese prehistory from about 14,000 BC to 300 BC.

Far from being a weed, it may have been considered a precious source of food.

there were very few places in which the horsetail could grow.

I feel like the people from ancient times must've considered the horsetail very important.

They are regarded as one of the great blessings of the mountains that mark the beginning of spring.

How should I put this...

They're the tiny spirits of the great earth,

gallantly aiming towards the heavens.

Or something like that!

...

And besides,

this is really yummy!

R-Really-?

You can really taste the flavor of the horsetail. I always know you were good at cooking, Ichiko-chan!

He attended one of the branch school and is two years my junior. He recently returned to Komori.

This guy's name is Yuta.

I guess I must

...

have a weak spot for tall men that wax romantic.

MeOw

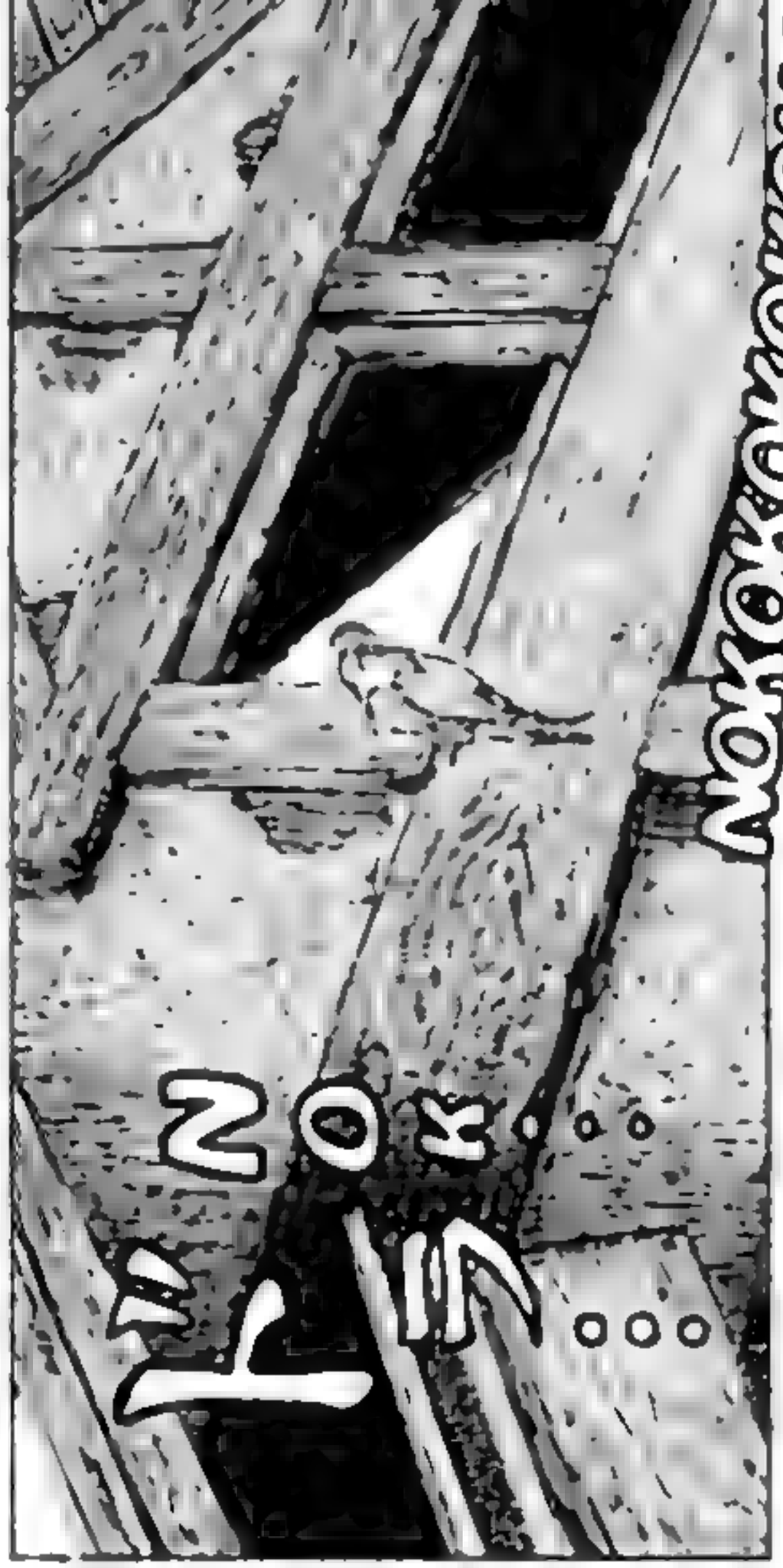
7th dish Horsetails END

You can also make horsetails into an egg drop dish right after it's been boiled. You add the boiled horsetails into a pot of dashi, sake, soy sauce, and mirin, that has already been heated up. You boil them all and bind it together with a scrambled egg.

T/L Note: This type of egg drop dish is different from the egg drop soups that you drink in America, it's like... A thick congealed egg type dish

Crickets and grasshoppers, ones with hair and ones without, green ones and black ones...

With the sudden surge in the population of stink bugs, something akin to the destruction of all leafy plants has occurred (even down to the leaves of the daikon radish!). However, the bugs don't seem to approach the spinach plant.



KOKOKOK

meow

The morning sun is basking over everything and the mist is rising from the soil in the fields.

meow

I'm also getting rid of any of the weeds that I happen to come across.

Look, the dandelion fluff is heavy with the morning dew.

I'm walking around the field, making sure that they're not too dried out or that the bugs haven't gotten into them.

It's a shimmering white insect cage.

Nyow, what shall we make for breakfast?

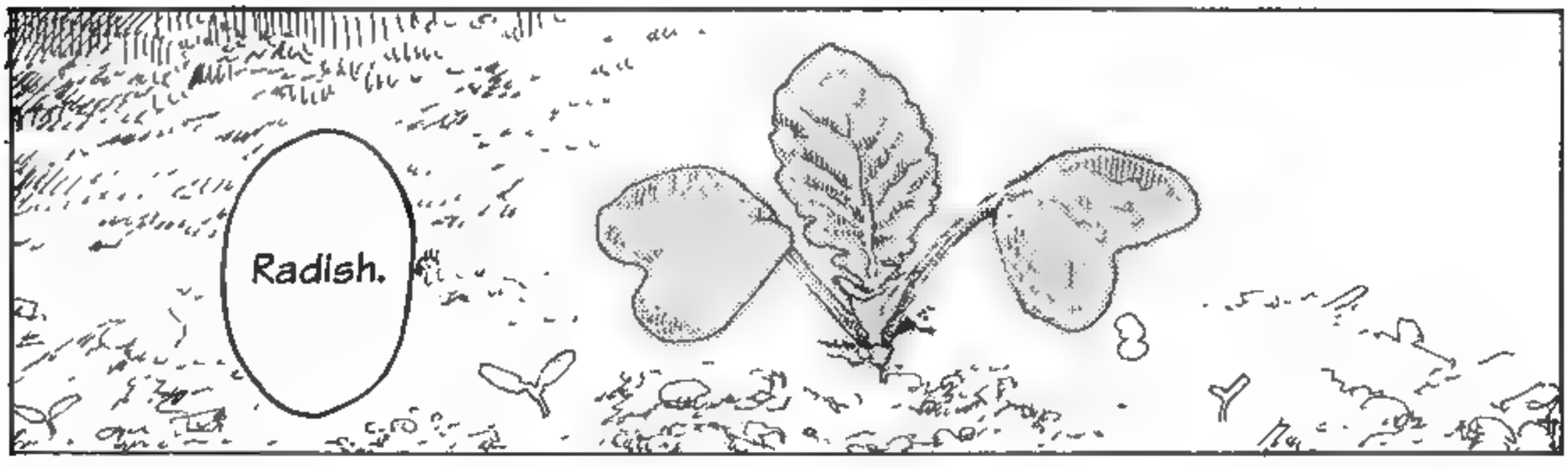
meow

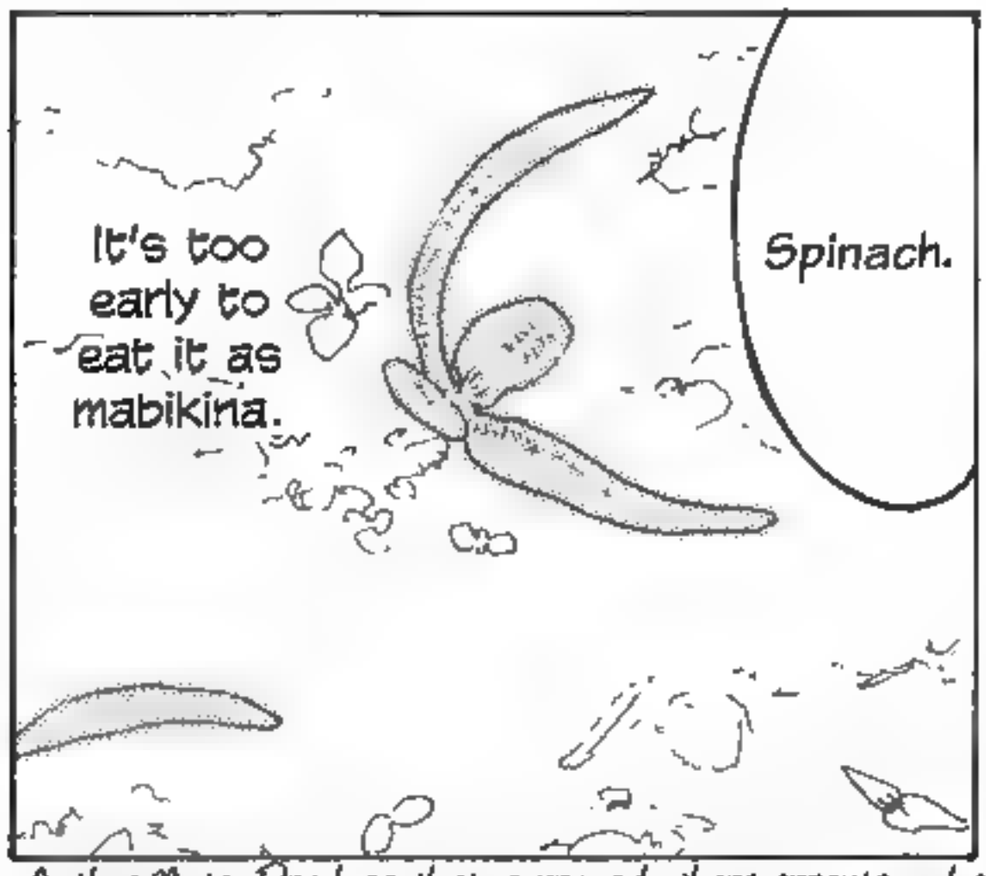
SWAT

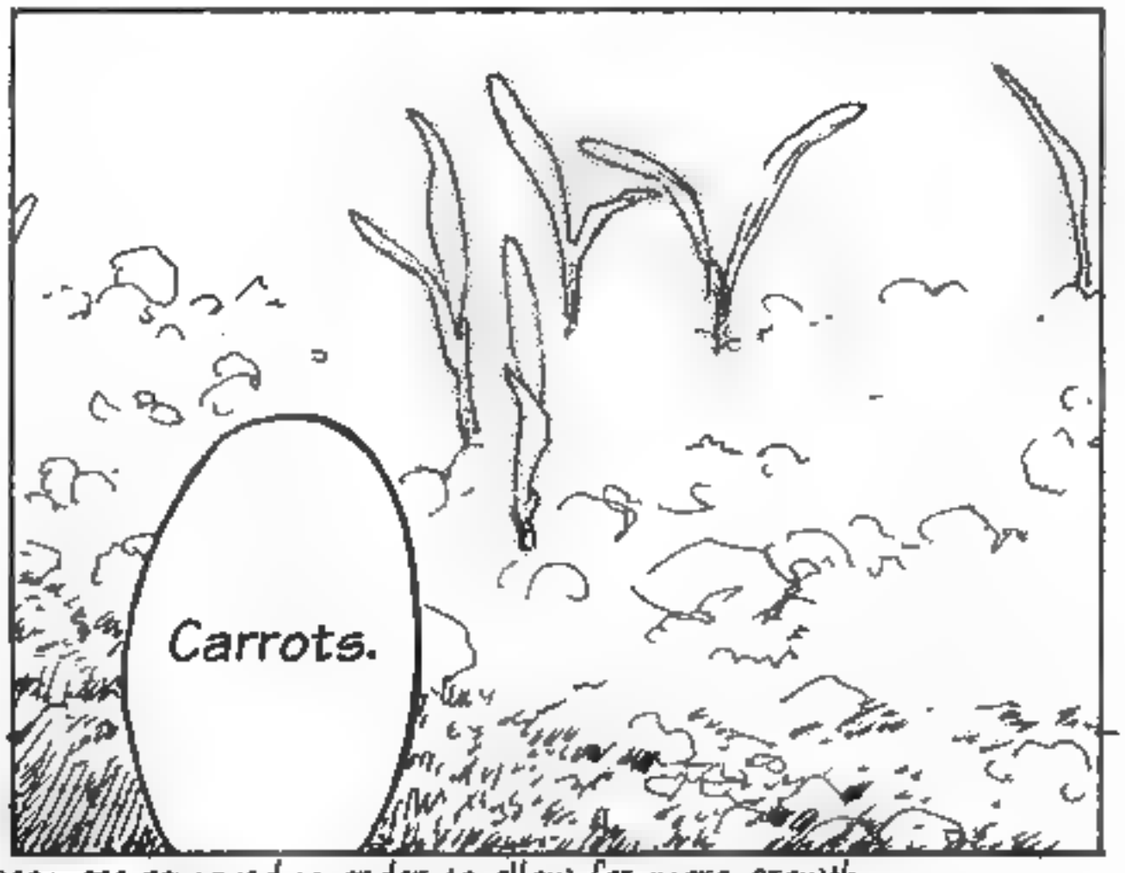
Awww.

...

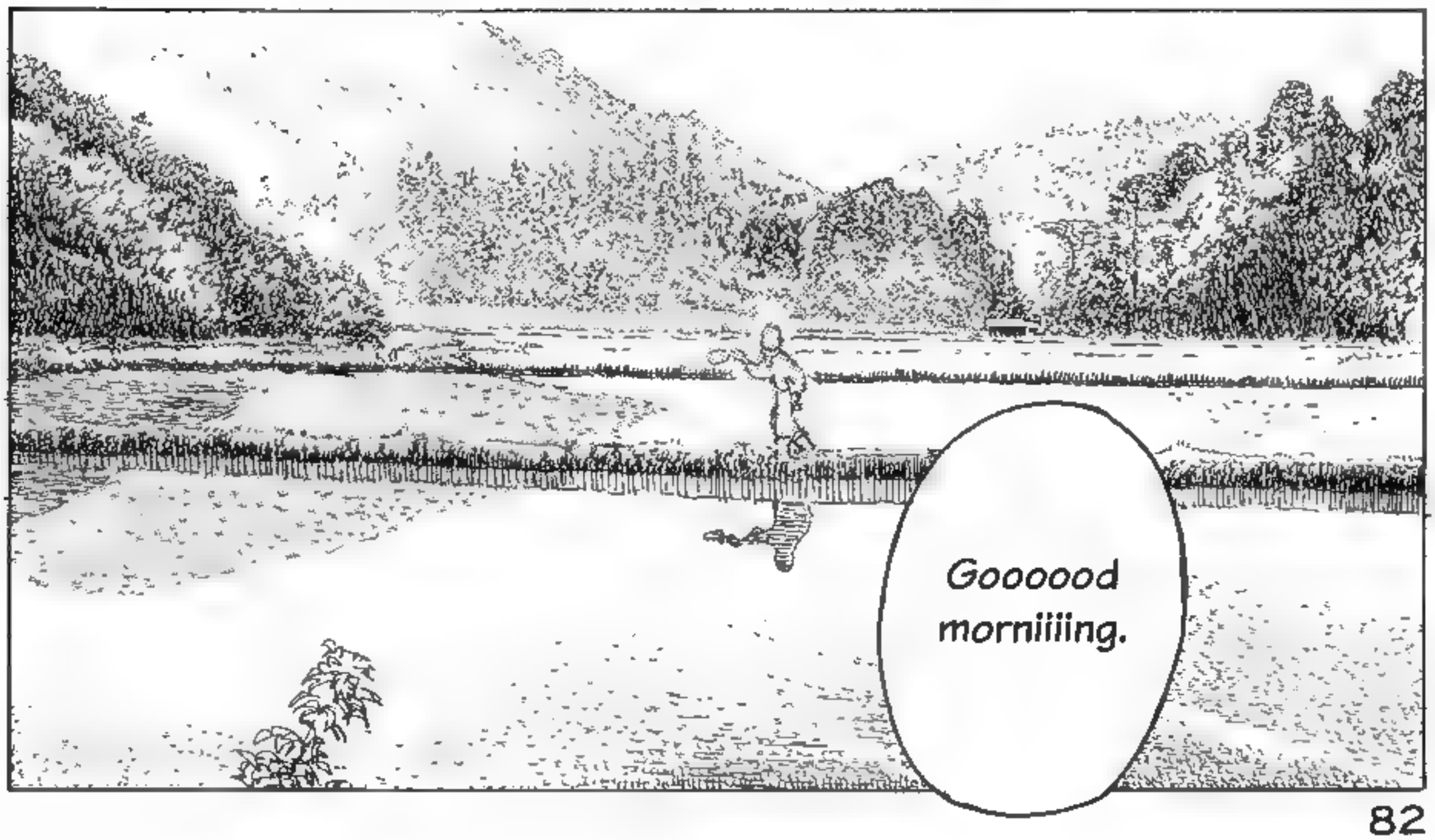
!




Author Note- Produce that is pruned where sprouts in between are removed in order to allow for more growth.



T/L Note: Udo is Japanese Spikenard

Thank you for always making my meals taste better.

SNIP

This is the mountain udo that mom transplanted over here.

It's all over the place now.

and watercress.

Some mint

Hup.

they're sitting over there looking pretty, ready to play the leading roles on the dining table.

As for the vegetables from the fields that have yet to make their debut,

Today's breakfast is...

SKRSH

with a pinch of salt,

udo and mint fritters,

sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle

some mayon-naise with the water-cress...

sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle

a fried egg,

and I'll put it all in between the baguette I baked yesterday.

Time to chow down!

And that's all for our topic on how long the Japanese Islands are... Coming up, we have music, news, and weather reports from your local broadcasting stations...

Mmm, the watercress really hits the spot.

MEOW

Nope, I'm not givin' you any.

Meow

Yum, yum, egg yolk.

Thank you for the meal!

I guess I should plant these sprouts.

Now then,

By the way, dinner is wild veggie tempura.

There is mountain udo that is green in color, and ones that look red, but the green ones are tastier. The white part of the rhizome of fresh udo that has just been dug up has a striking fragrance, as well as a faint sweetness that is really amazing.

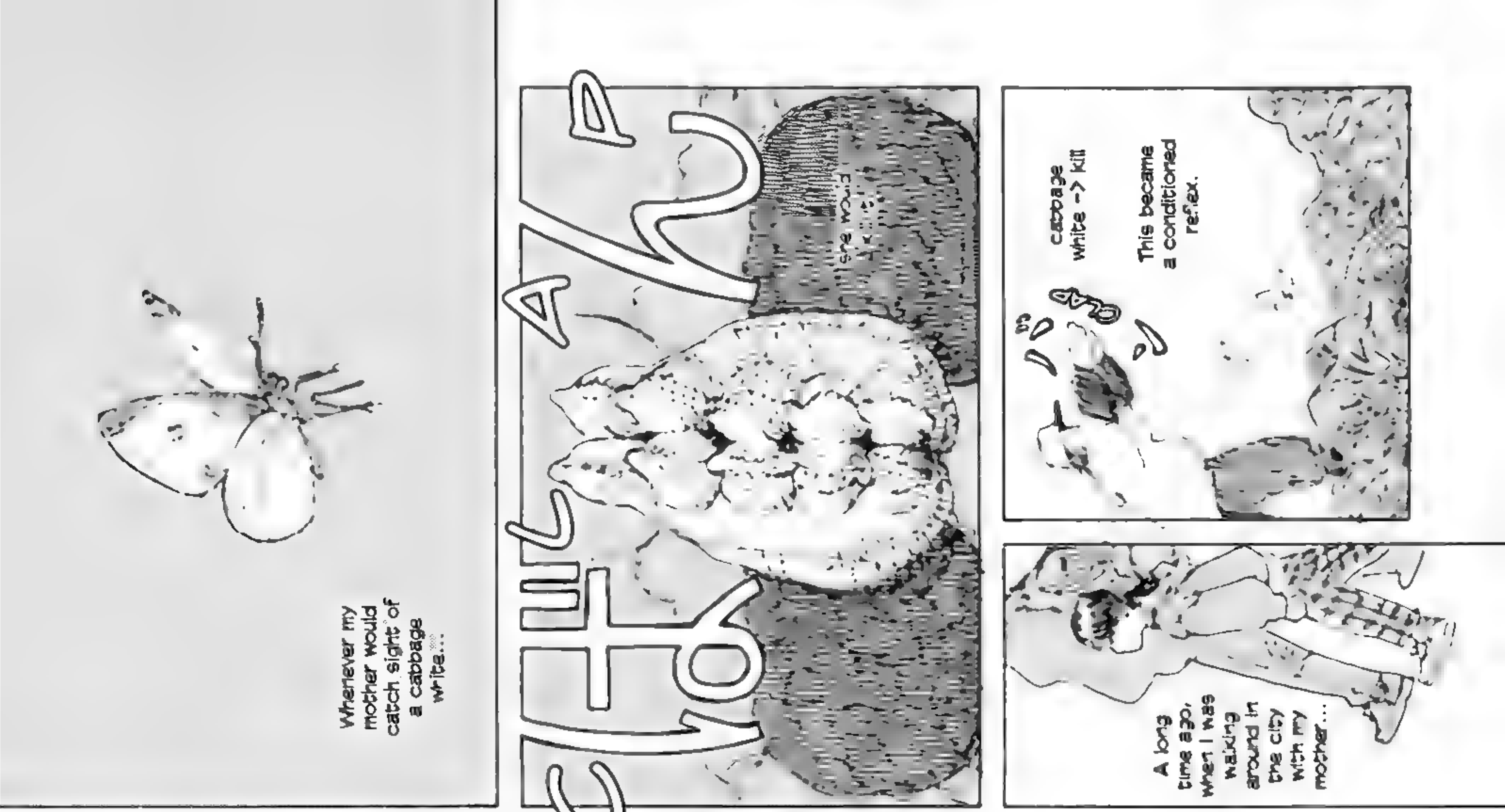
With udo that has grown out a bit, you can trim off the side sprouts and use it for tempura.

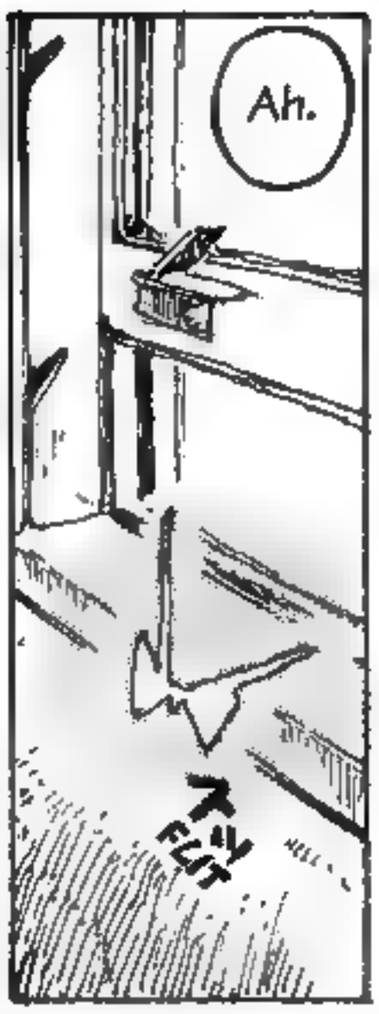
There's always a ton of watercress around water channels everywhere.

On a rainy day, when I casually looked up at a peach tree in the garden, there was a Japanese rat snake resting there. It was pretty big so I thought it might be the master of the house. Afterwards, when the typhoon happened, the peach tree fell onto the ground and into the marsh on the side. Now it's growing in the marsh.

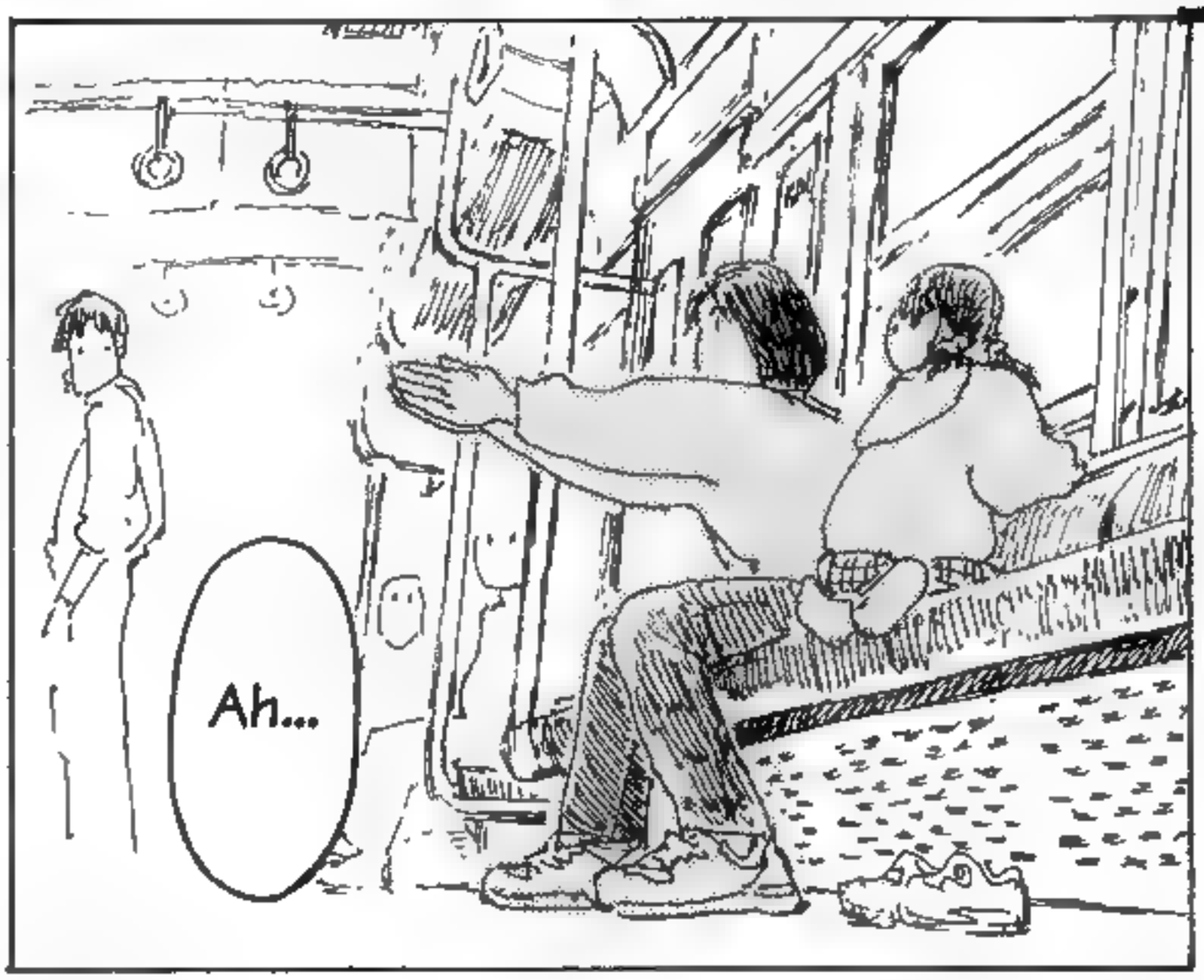
# 9th dish

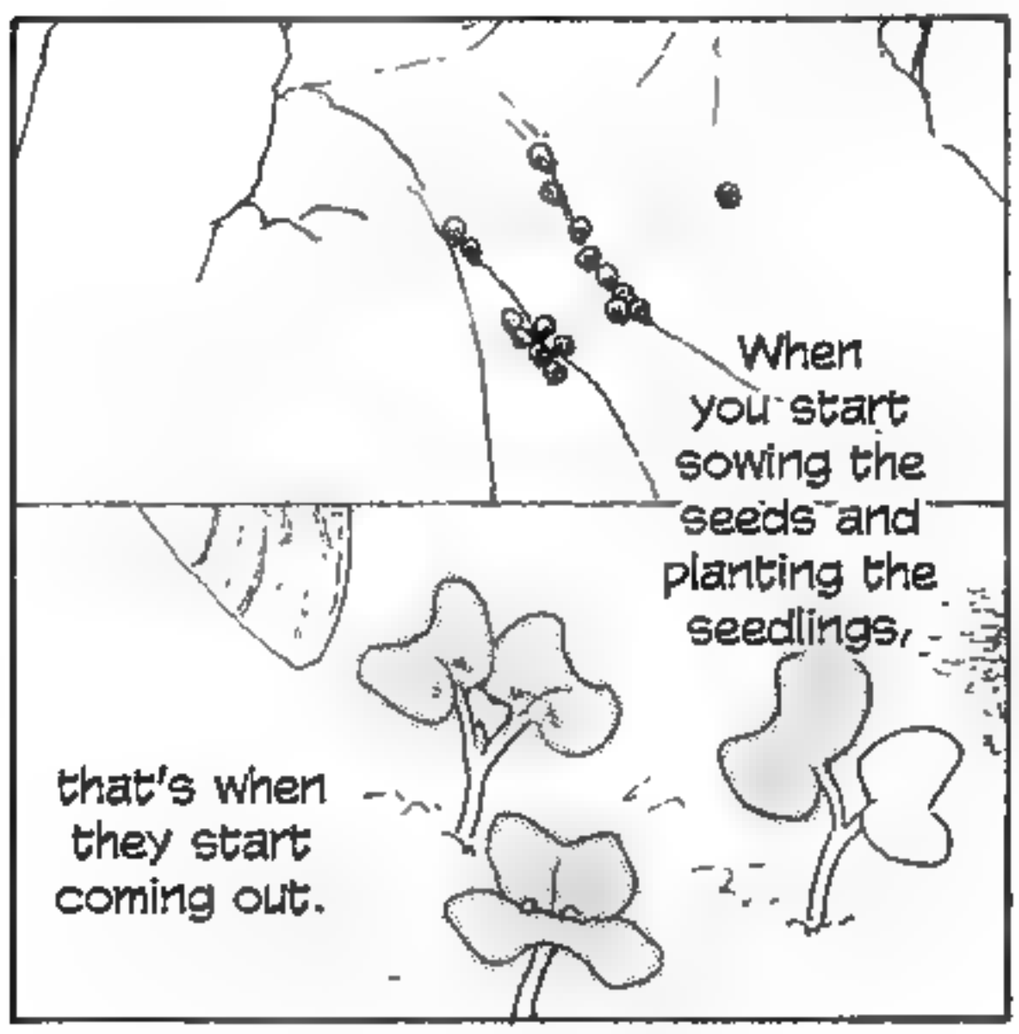
## Spring Cabbage

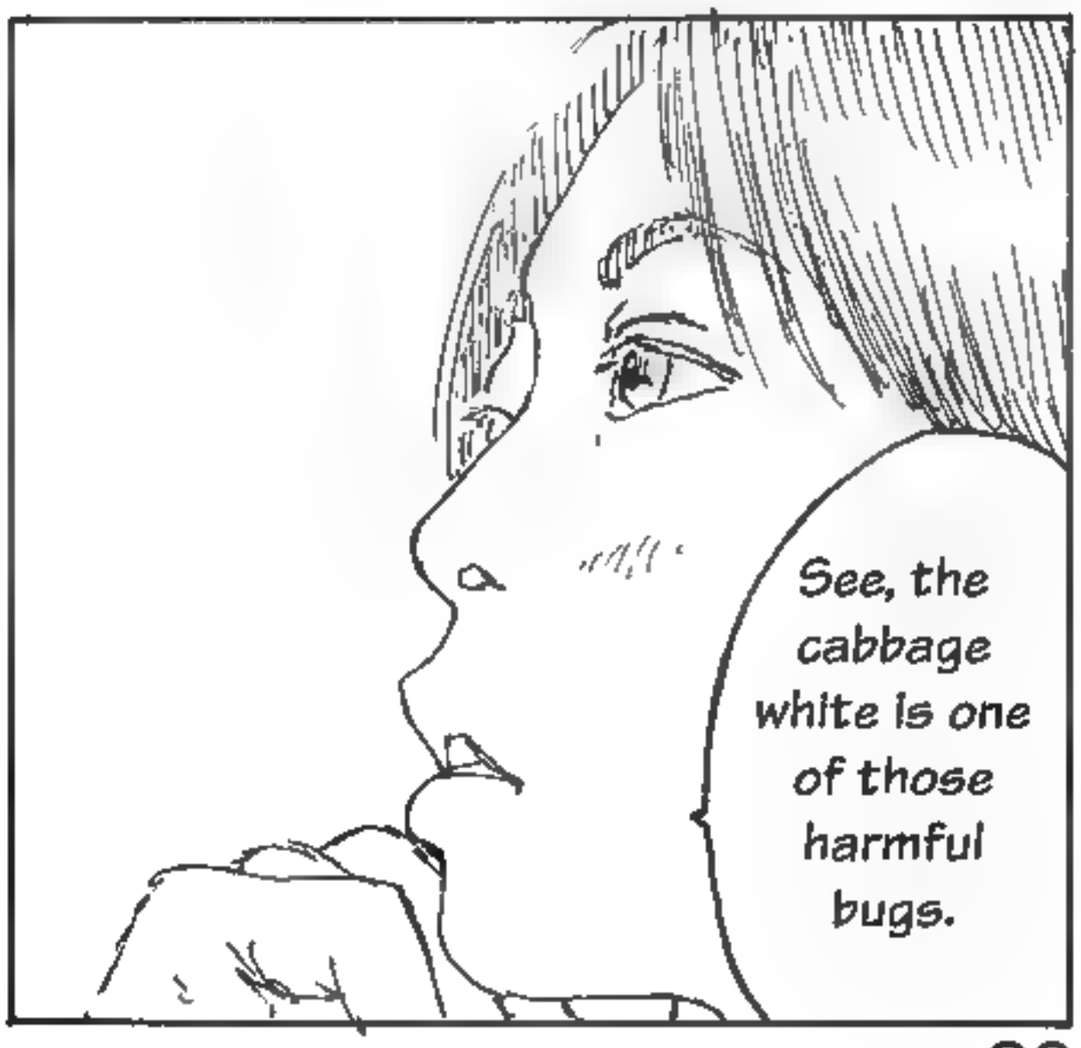

A long time ago, when I was walking through the city with my mother...
This became a conditioned reflex.
cabbage white -> kill
Whenever my mother would catch sight of a cabbage white...
She would...



I can't forget the expression of the people that were riding in the same car as us.



and whenever you find the eggs that were laid trying to hide somewhere, you get rid of them.

Every-day you go around checking the front and back-side of the leaves,

There are so many of them! They're all so big!

All they ate was this little bit, but there's still so much poop!

Nevertheless...

But I show no mercy to the caterpillars.

considering what happened on the train.

I'm pretty lenient when it comes to cabbage white butterflies...

Freshly harvested spring cabbage can be eaten raw without adding anything and be extremely tasty.

Cabbage is different from bok choy, the entire body of it will curl into a ball for you. They're a very nice bunch.

CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP

CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP

Also, when you put some perilla or olive oil on it and sprinkle it with a little bit of salt, it makes the insides of your mouth feel all smooth and really brings out the sweetness. I just can't stop munching on it.

You can chop them up and use them for kakiage.

As for the leaves on the outside that are harder, even if you boil them or saute them, they're still not that good.

T/L Note: Kakiage is mixed tempura

CHO
クー
MIP
サー

It's sweet and has a nice texture.

purrrrrrr purrrrrrr

When rain hits cabbage that is curled up and plump,

Cabbage's weakness is rain.

Awwww!

it causes it to rupture.

!

BOOM

Oh no!

boss
ボス

Hey.

Do you still have any cabbage left?

How does it look?

Around this time of the year, the people of Komori wander around and survey each other's fields.

What did you plant?

Every year, I plant too many and end up not being able to eat them all.

I always know I do, but I'm just so scared of bad weather that I end up planting more than enough.

I was asked to check up on them.

One after another, the balled up cabbages are shared with others.

Cabbage is...

sweet -> confections -> cake...

I wonder if there are any new ways to eat cabbage. I must get my hands on this hidden jewel...

slish slish slish slish slish slish

Well, you can't grate it, so I guess you have to use a food processor.

Oh yeah! You *can* make carrot cake, so it might be possible.

Well, if I'm doing that maybe I should just use salad oil instead of butter.

Let's keep it simple for now and leave out the raisins.

Flour, sugar, and eggs.

And for the main flavor, I should use some sort of spice...

It's cabbage, so... maybe squeezed ginger juice would go with it?

I wonder why nobody has thought of this before.

This is definitely gonna work.

I feel like this could become a staple cake just like carrot cake is...

Maybe I'm a genius...

Ooh, I can smell it baking.

じりじりじりじり

tick tick tick tick

It smells... really familiar.

My new crea... Huh?

This aroma,

I've definitely smelled it before...

じりじりじりじりじり

tick tick tick tick

But it's supposed to be the first one of its kind in the world... so why?

OHHHH!

じりじりじりじりじり

tick tick tick tick

Cabbage + Wheat Flour + Egg + Ginger...?

DING

It's okonomiyaki...



9th dish Spring Cabbage END

If you make it like this, you wouldn't end up with okonomiyaki, but rather a "cake".

# Cabbage Cake

18x8x6 cm Poundcake Mold

| | |
|---|---|
| Wheat Flour | 150g |
| Boiled Cabbage (Finely Minced) | 150g |
| Sugar | 70g |
| Butter | 50g |
| Baking powder | 1 teaspoon |
| Egg | 2 |
| Raisins | 1 tablespoon |
| Cinnamon | 1 teaspoon |

1

Sift the flour.

2

Add sugar to butter and cream them.

3

Add the egg and mix well until smooth.

4

Add the cabbage, cinnamon, and raisins and mix.

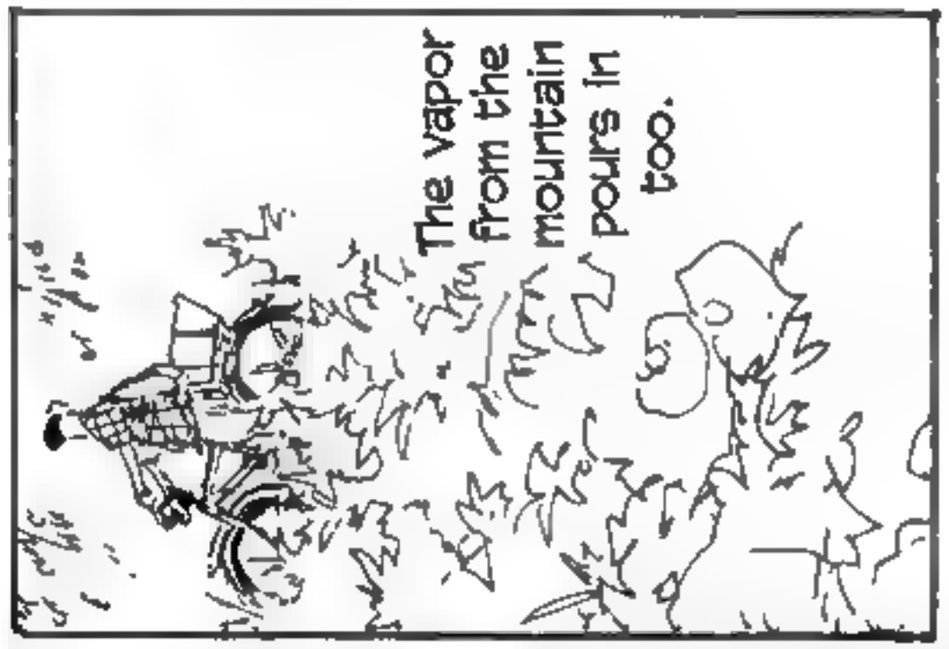
5

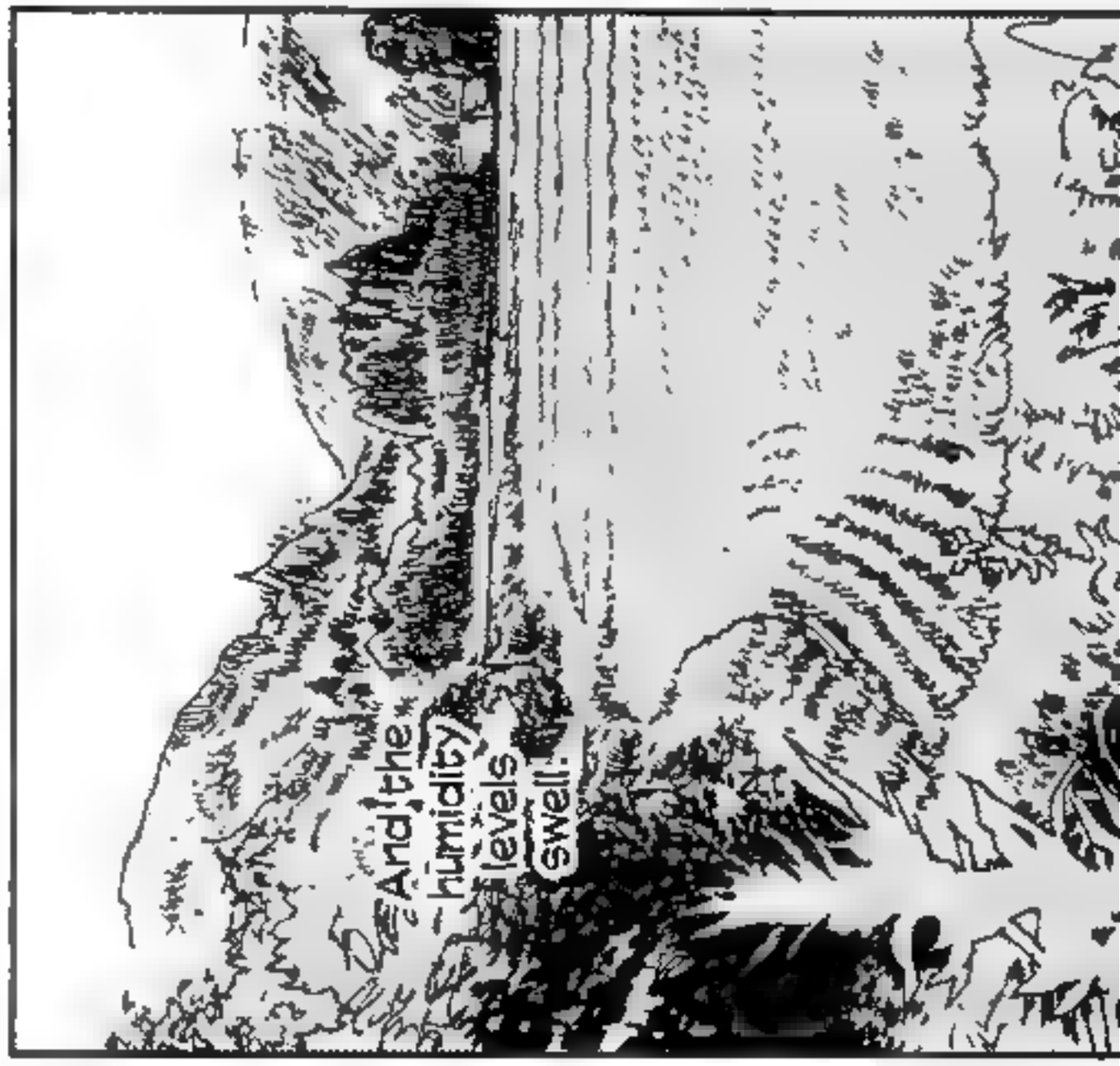
Add flour little by little and mix vigorously.

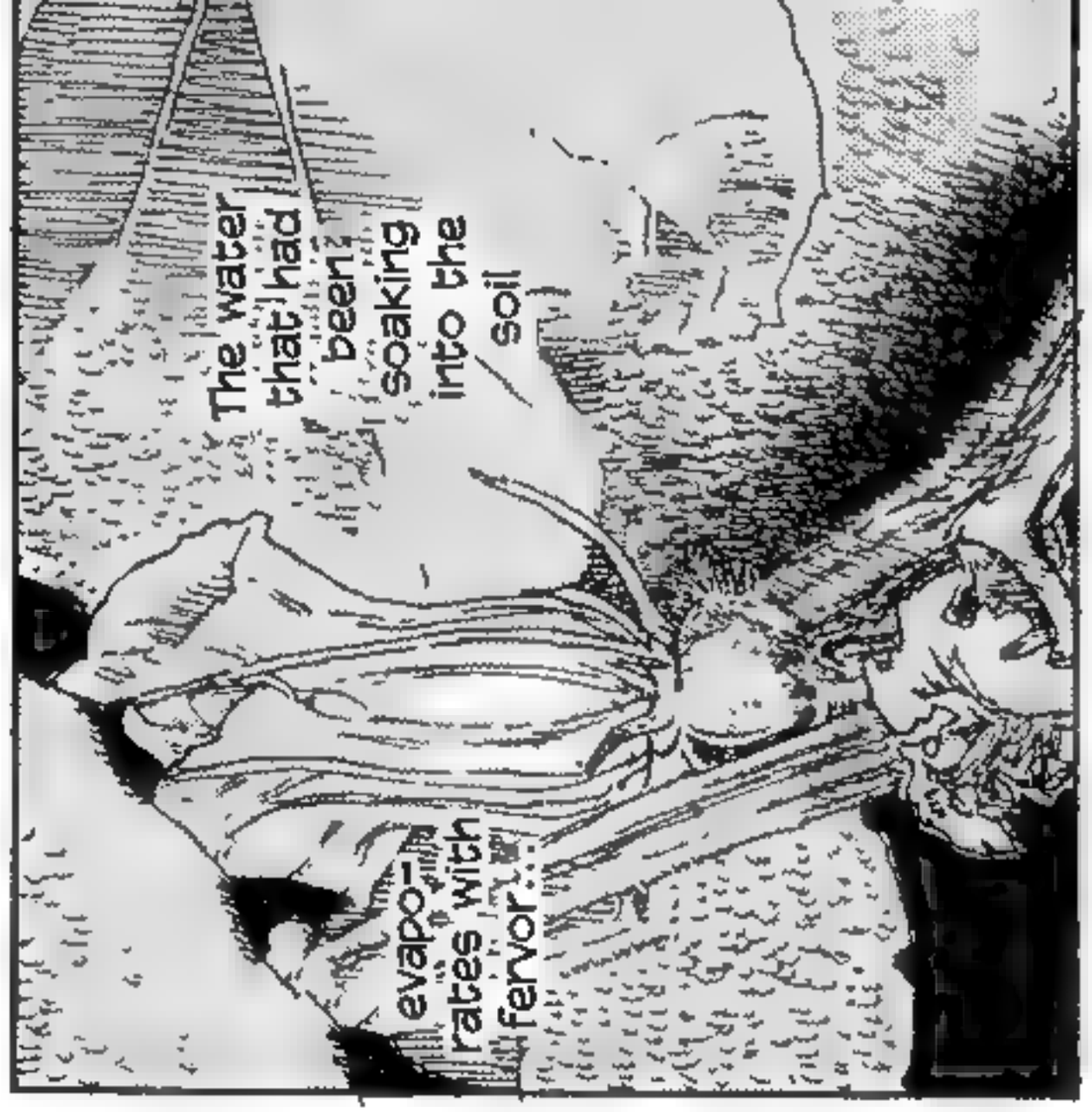
6

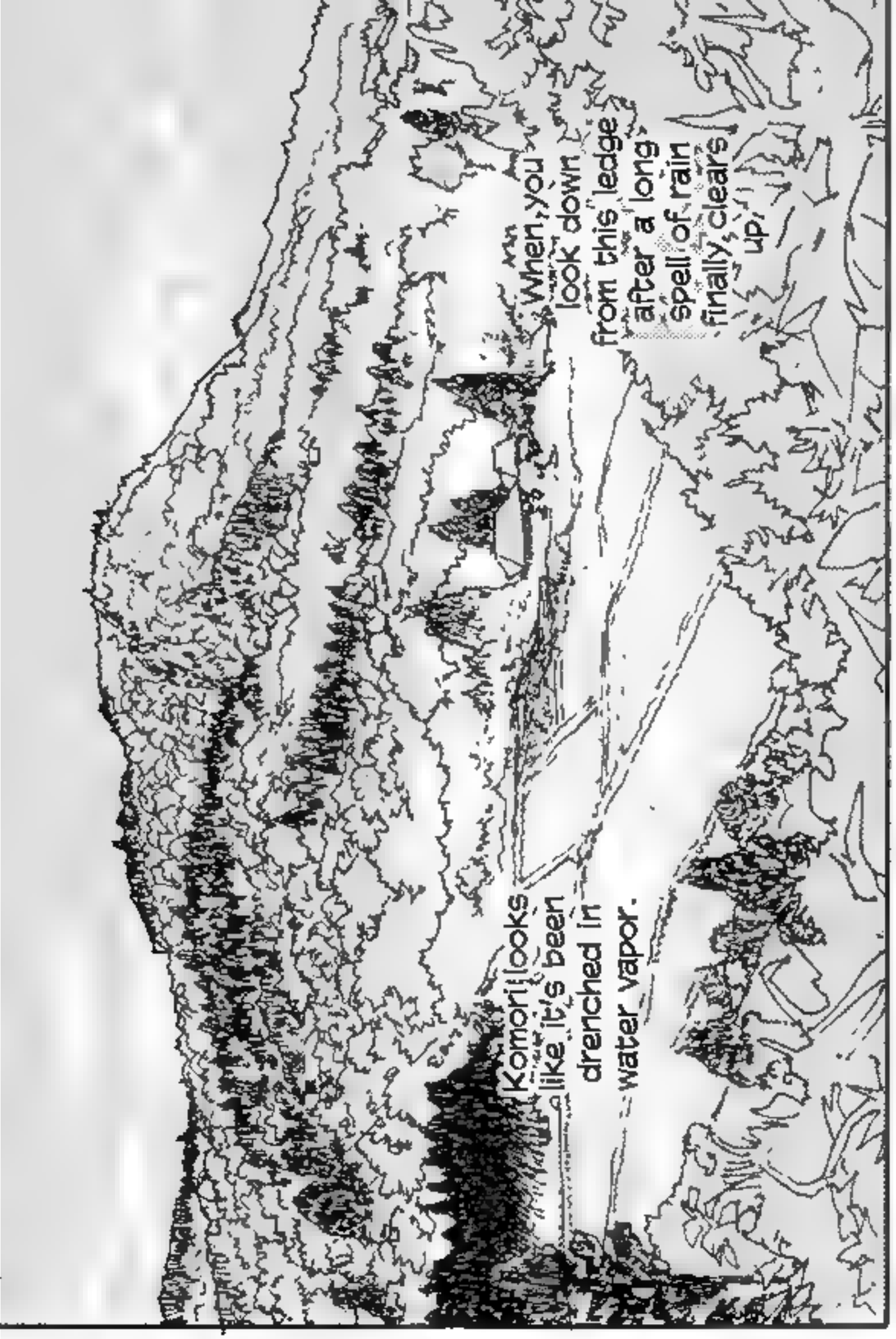
Put it inside the mold. Bake in the oven for 50 minutes to 1 hour at 180 C. (approx 350 F).

When I was out weeding in the fields, I heard
a rustle coming from the woods by the side.
I thought it may have been a bear, so I stopped
moving, but what ended up appearing was just a
wild goat.




When you look down from this ledge after a long spell of rain finally clears up,
Komori looks like it's been drenched in water vapor.

Little Forest

# 10th dish

## Stove Bread

With humidity levels close to one hundred percent, the resistance in the air makes it feel like,

It creates an atmosphere that clings to you like a wet shirt.

*if you put on fins, you could swim through it.*

Weed-
ing?

RUSTLE

RUSTLE

PLOP

If I don't move the air around this place, it might get ill.

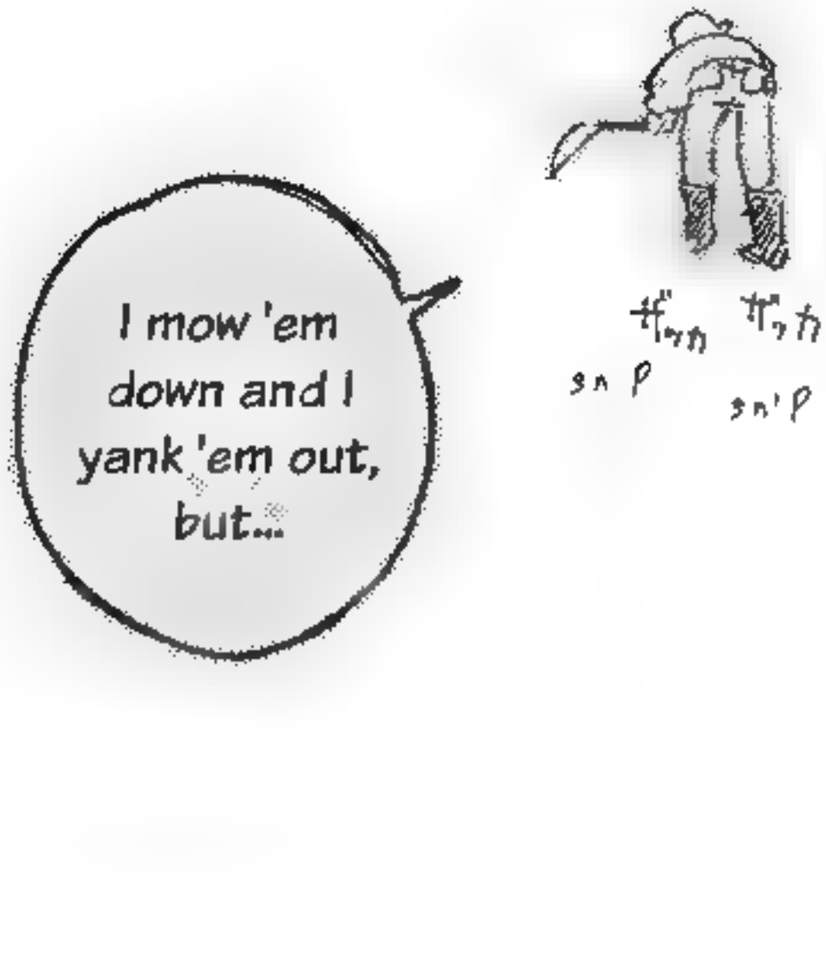
The life force of the weeds in the fields becomes stronger.

Huh? Well, don't fall into the dew.

from a mugwort root I dug up yesterday.

A new sprout had already shuddered and come to life

The fields and roads are becoming completely covered in weeds.



Ah...

Mold forms on the wooden ladle you use for jam.

No matter how many days you leave them up to air, the laundry never dries.

Stoves with smokestacks force the moisture out with their flames,

so it dries out the rooms indoors.

It's time to break out the stove.

Enough is enough.

it must be done in the battle against mold.

The heat is nothing more than a minor annoyance, so

It gets pretty hot but,

The high heat and high humidity are well suited for fermentation.

yeast, luke-warm water...

Salt, rice syrup.

I take advantage of the situation and use it to bake bread.

There aren't any families that grow wheat in Komori.

The daruma stove is bigger than my regular oven, so I can bake loaves of bread that are bigger than usual.

Ahhn.

T/L Note. A daruma stove is a traditional Japanese wood stove.

If the wheat can't dry out, then it can't grow.

The rainy season and the growing season overlap, so the wheat can't dry out.

So I use the flour that I bought for the bread.

Flour too.

back in the days when we were told to increase our production of rice. We'd even convert the fields to paddies.

But we used to grow it,

T/L Note: Jigoma is locally or brand-less produced flour.

it is very difficult to get it to end up as a thin film similar to how it would be if you used bread flour.

Therefore, rather than kneading it to no avail, it seems much better to let it ferment for a while after you mix all the ingredients together,

Around here, all the bread and cakes are made with "jigoma" because we can buy it at wholesale for cheap.

No matter how much you knead jigoma,

you light up a bunch of charcoal in the stove.

Then you smooth it out and when the yeast has fermented enough,

This makes it much easier.

and let the dough rise slowly while getting rid of the gas about twice ...

'Cause it'd get too cold.

And that's why you don't bake stove bread in the winter.

Scoring the bread with a razor.

If you let air in, the flames will flicker and the bread will burn so don't open and close the oven midway.

And it dries out the room, too.

F is the temperature of the remaining heat in the stove just before it goes out.

Bread bakes at about 200 C, which

Sprinkling flour on top.

The baking that gets done in these stoves isn't exactly consistent, but the parts where the heat is focused end up turning out a lot tastier than normal.

Ta-dah!

and have some bread as a snack.

I'm not going to let a little rainy weather get the best of me.

I should go and pick some mulberries,



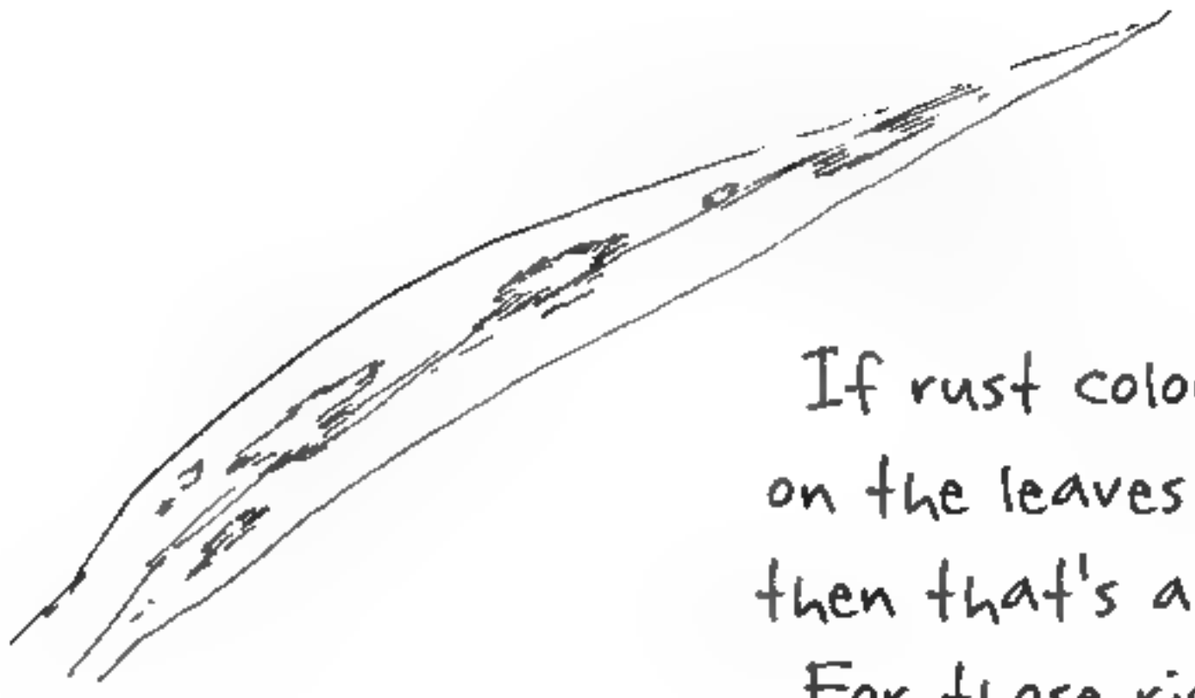
10th dish Stove Bread

END

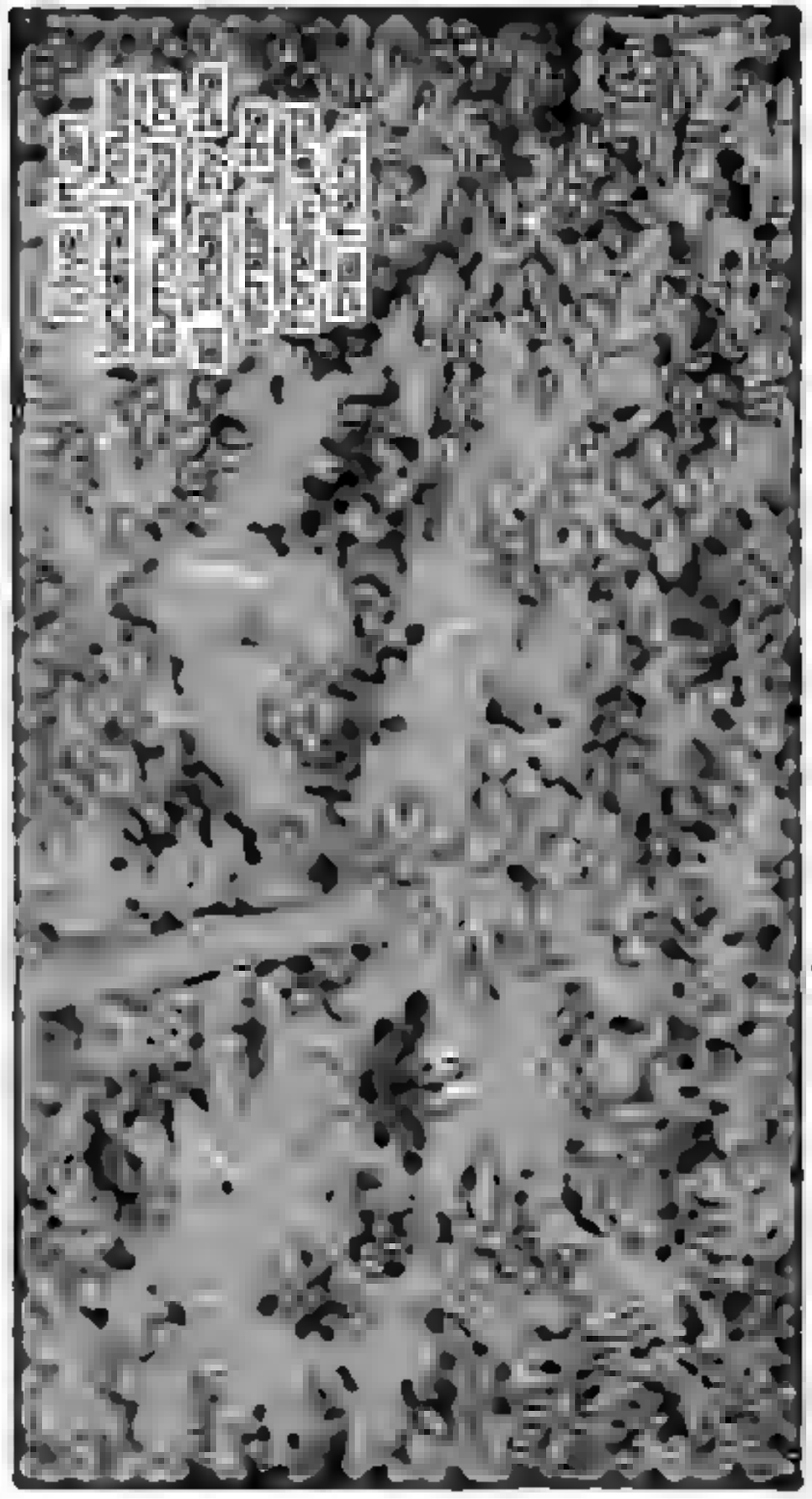
Dough that has fermented enough.

This is a chocolate chip cake that I tried baking in a stove. It was burnt.

I'm using the instant-dry yeast that's always available at the market. I've tried using all-natural yeast before, but even though I'm just making it for one person, it's a lot of work, so I only use it when I really feel inclined to. The amount of moisture you want is always dependent on the condition of the flour, so you have to add the water while observing the state of the flour. For example, fresh wheat flour holds moisture fairly well, and with just a tiny bit of water you'll end up with dripping dough. Dough that's easy to shape has a consistency like an earlobe. As a standard, for instant-dry yeast, for every 250g of flour, you use 1 teaspoon of yeast (3g). However, when you are leaving it to ferment for a long period of time, you use slightly less. When you use too little yeast, all you have to do is wait patiently, and it will ferment. If you use too much, and it ferments too quickly, all you need to do is bake it earlier.



If rust colored circles appear
on the leaves of the rice-plants
then that's a sign of rice blight.
For those rice fields that are
fortunate, those rings will end
at the leaves, but if it reaches
the ear of the plant then it will
influence the harvest.



T/L Note: Uwabamiso is a type of Japanese natto, 'Elaeagnus umbellata'

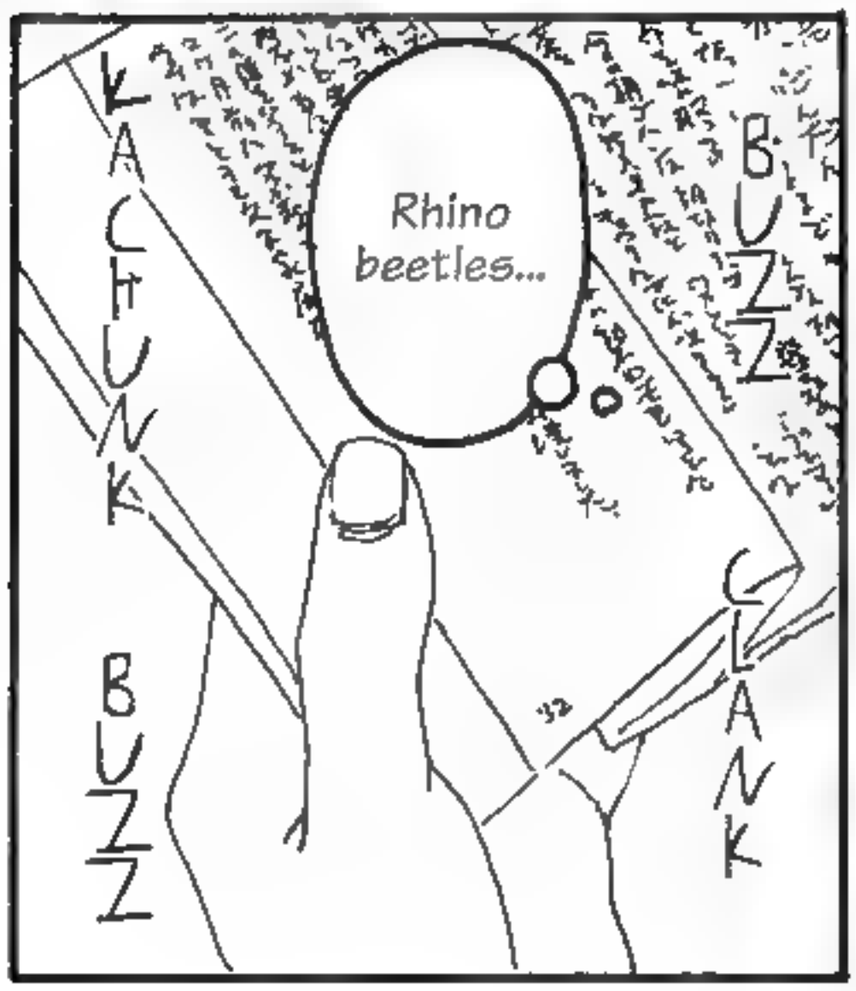
# 11th dish

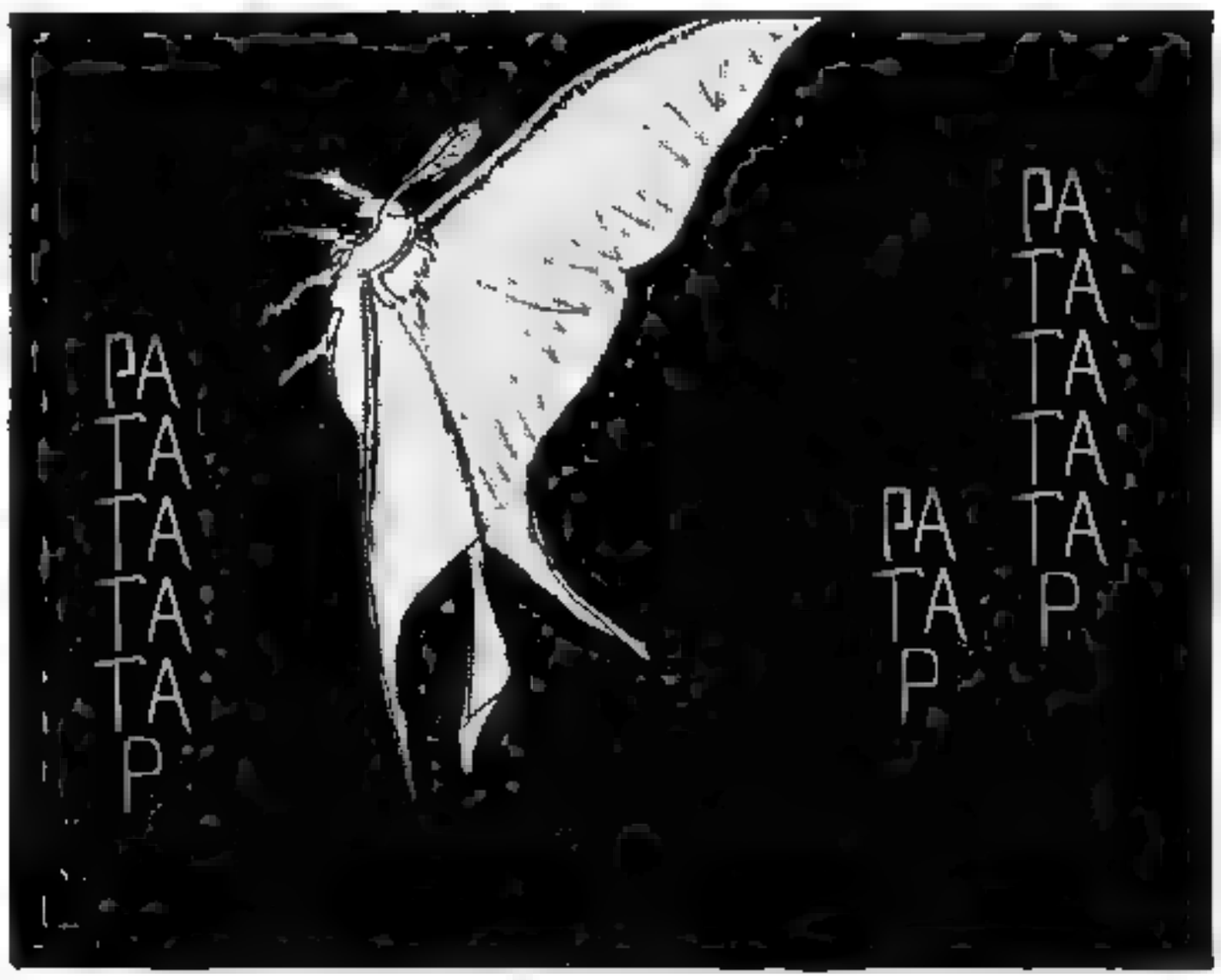
Mizu (Uwabamiso)

TAP

And for that reason there is a never ending line of visitors that come calling at night.

PA TA TA TA P
That must be the moon moths.
PA TA TA TA P


Rhino beetles...
CHUNK
BUZZ
CLANK


PA TA TA TA TA P
PA TA TA TA TA P

PATATATAP
CLIVK
CHHK CHHK
BVVG
TVVG
PIIVG

There isn't that much water in the streams nearby...

Nice and cool.

There are freshwater crabs as well.

Despite that, occasionally a trout from the main current will find itself up here.

Sometimes they'll scuttle across the fields.

*Author Note* Unaba-miso is an edible perennial plant

You can eat them until autumn arrives.

And finally, mizu* grows abundantly in these streams.

T/L Note: Tsukemono is Japanese pickled vegetables.

It's crunchy and has got a bit of stickiness to it.

Or mix it with tsukemono.

T/L Note: Ohitashi is boiled greens in bonito flavored soysauce

make ohitashi with it.

After stripping it of its rind, you can boil the stem quickly and

CHOPCHOPCHOPCHOP

And enjoy it over warm rice.

If you pound up the red part of the root with a kitchen knife and bring all that stickiness out, you get what they call "mizutororo". You can flavor it with miso or vinegar, soy sauce, and mirin.

T/L Note: Mizutororo = Grated Muzu

I eat it all the time. Way more than I eat grated yams.

I always want another bowl, even when I don't have much of an appetite because of the summer heat.

TWEETWEE TWEET TWEETWEE

ピピ°
リリ
ピピ°
リリ

The birds of the valley are chirping.

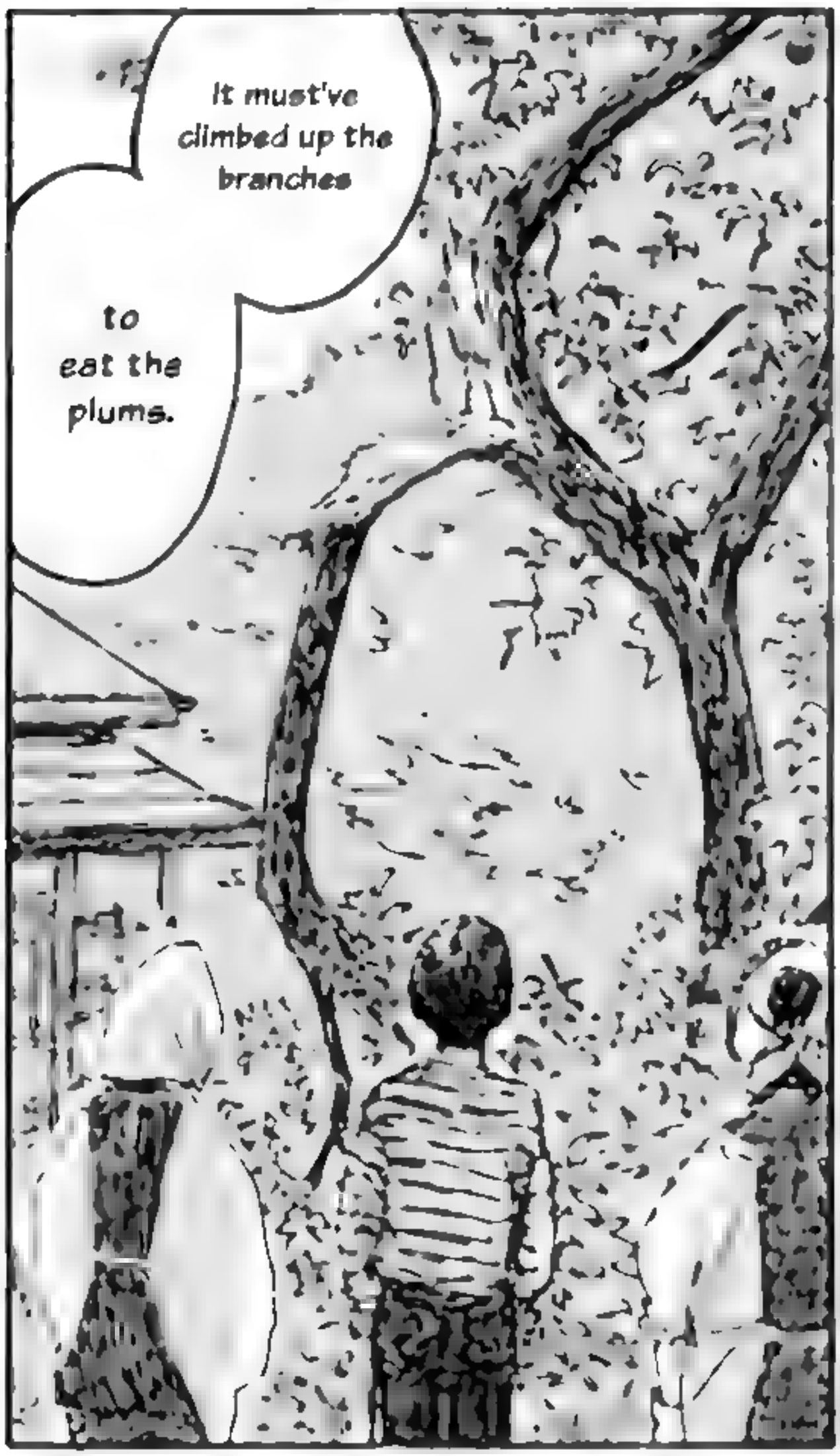
SPLASH SPLASH

ジャバジャバ

The stream becomes a pathway for the beasts.

RUSTLE

Hey! What's going on out there!?
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK


It must've climbed up the branches
to eat the plums.

Must've been a bear...

I'm surrounded on all sides by the stream, the forest, and the fields.

I wonder if it got injured.

rattle

And for that reason,

HOO HOO HOOT

HOO HOOT

there is a never ending line of visitors that come calling at night.



11th dish Mizu (Uwabamiso) END

If you prepare mizu as ohitashi, you can eat the entire plant. But it's such a pain to remove the rind, and the areas around the leaves always have this stringiness to them, so I pretty much just always eat it grated.

Even if you quickly boil it as it is, it'll still be quite viscous, so you can mix it together with vinegar and enjoy the texture of it. It's crispy and sort of slimy and it's really good if you put some miso on it.

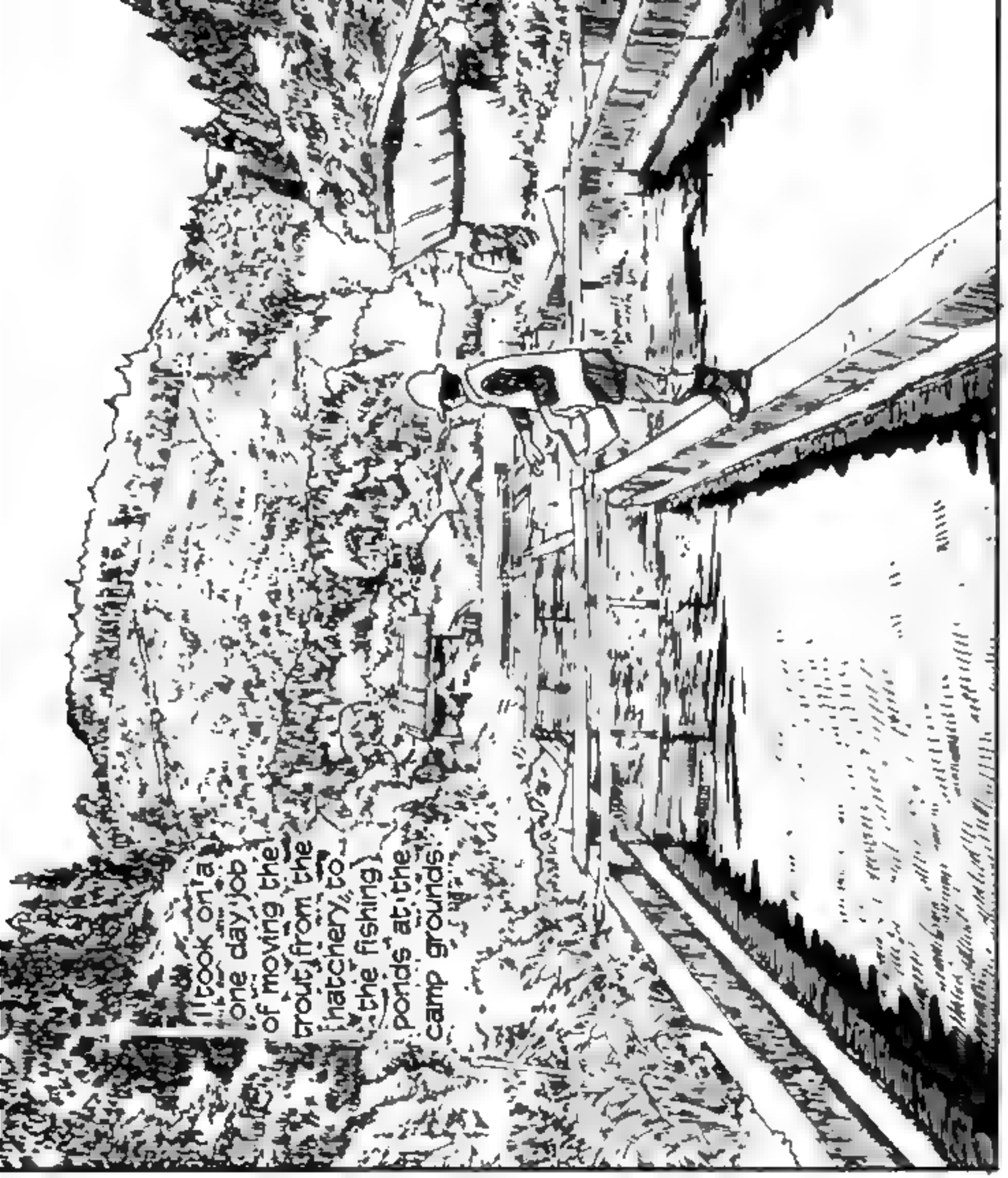
It flowers in autumn, so you can pickle it and store it for later.

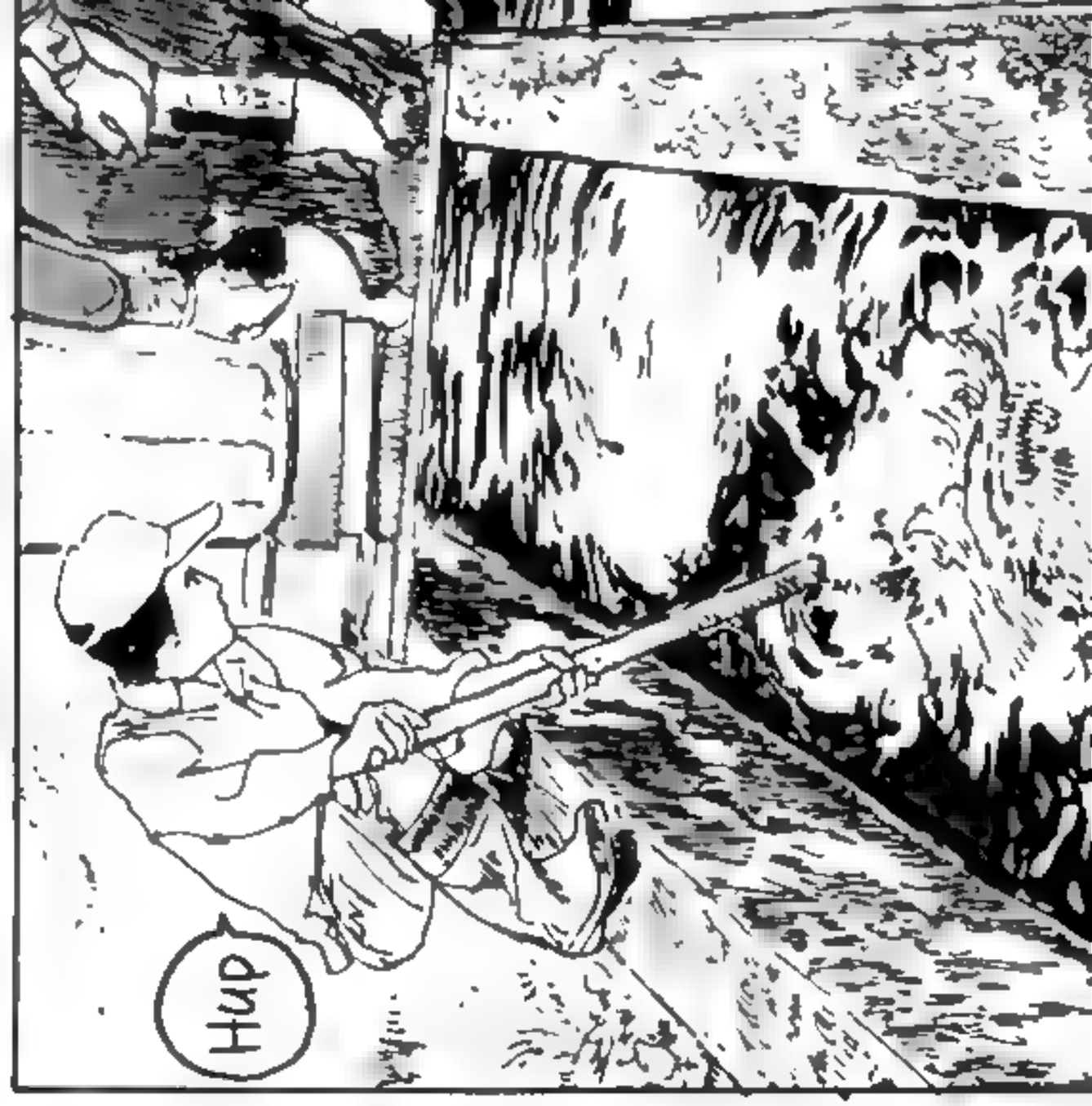
A moon moth in the morning.

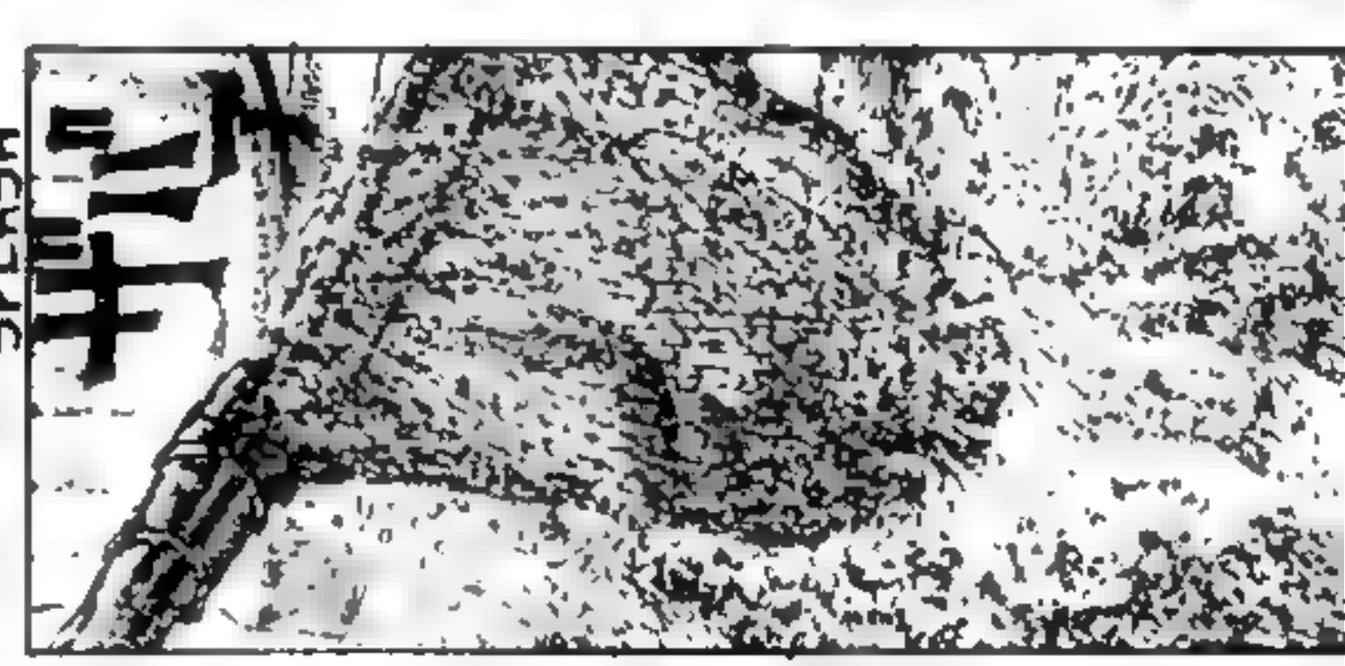
When I thought about how I would've ran straight into it if I had just continued on, I broke into a cold sweat. That was what happened the first time I came across a bear.

It stuck the tip of its nose out into the road and sniffed around a bit, and then turned itself around and ran away. From the glimpse I caught of it, I felt like it had to be at least three times as large as me.

Once when I was pushing my bike up a mountain path, I heard some sounds coming from some bushes. I thought that there might be someone there, so I paused. There it was just a few meters in front of me.






Little Forest

# 12th dish

Trout

Should we switch?

Nghh!

SPLASH

FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP

SPLASH SPLASH

SPL SPL SPL SPL SPL

CLAK CLAK CLAK

ゴトゴト

ブウウー

VRRR

1

I'm pretty sure...

Say, Yuta, why'd you come back to Komori?

VRRR

Yeah, that was the plan.

I remember you saying that "school" was just an excuse for you to get out of here.

Ready?

That's why I ended up getting a regular job out there and everything.

SPLOSPLOSPLOSPLOSPLOSPLOSPLOSH

actually experienced and done yourself.

I mean about, like, the things that you've...

And I'm not talking about like, dialects and stuff.

But, you know, there's something different about the words that get spoken here in Komori, and the ones over there.

VRRRRM

They're the ones you trust.

And people who can do that for all sorts of things are the ones you respect.

Those are the only things that you can really talk about with a sense of responsibility, right?

And what you felt or thought of as a result of them.

I just got sick of hearing those shallow people spouting their empty words,

acting all high and mighty, just for passing along something that someone else made...

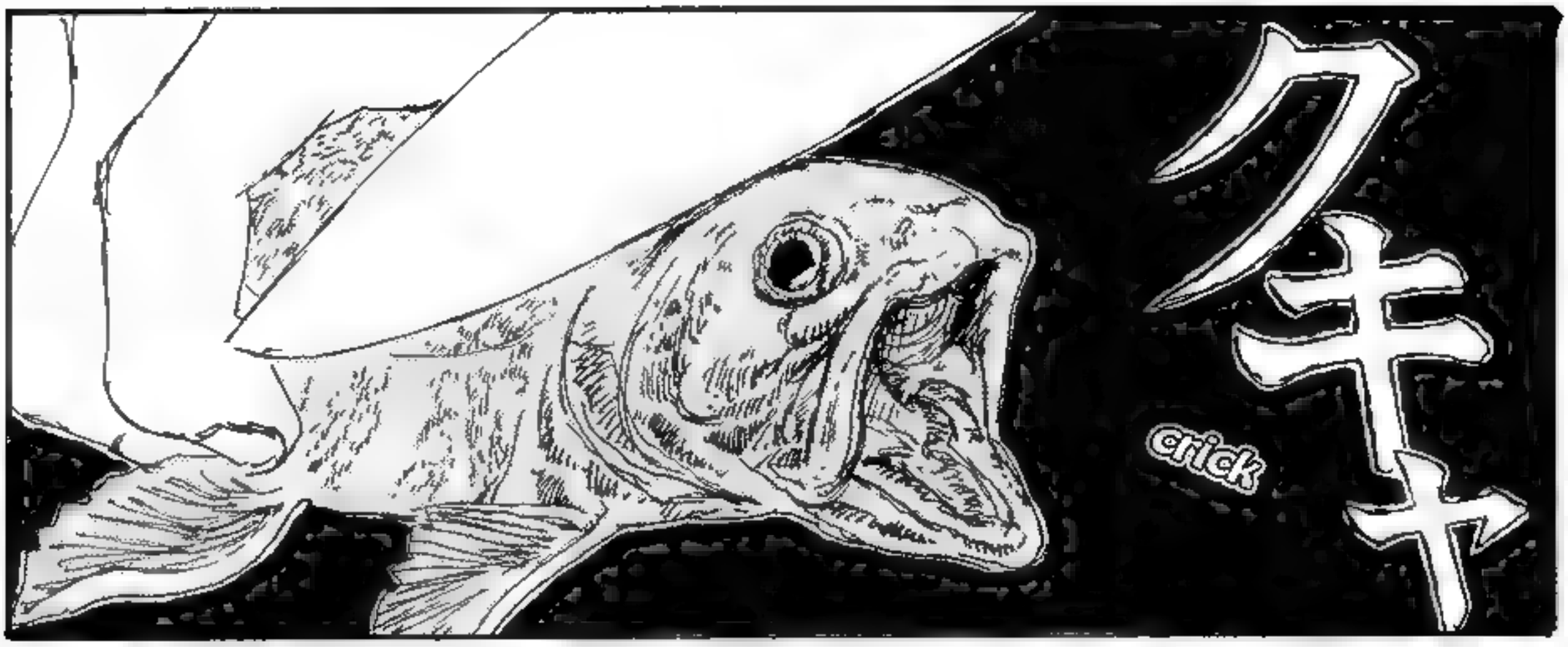
All those people who pretend like they know everything, even though they haven't actually done anything,

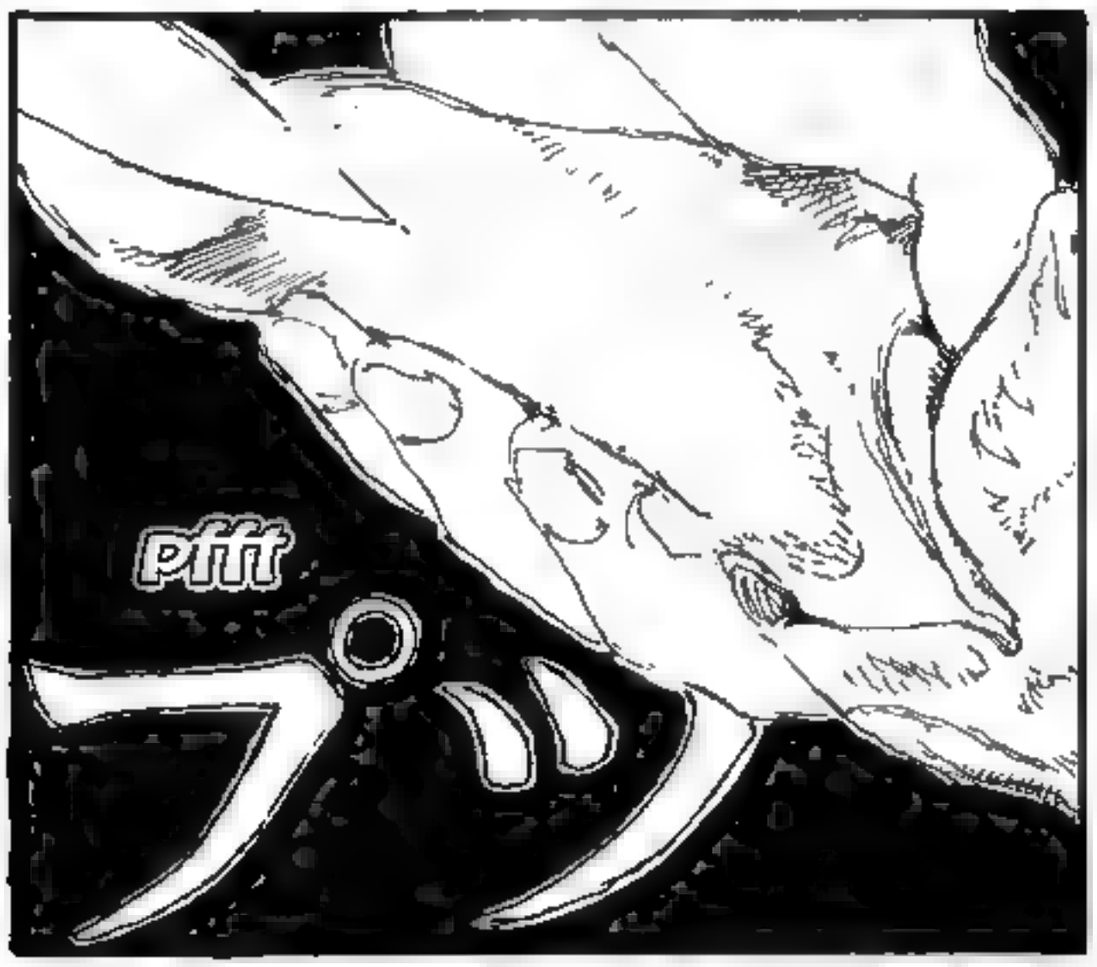
Please enjoy some of our trout.

Thank you for your hard work.

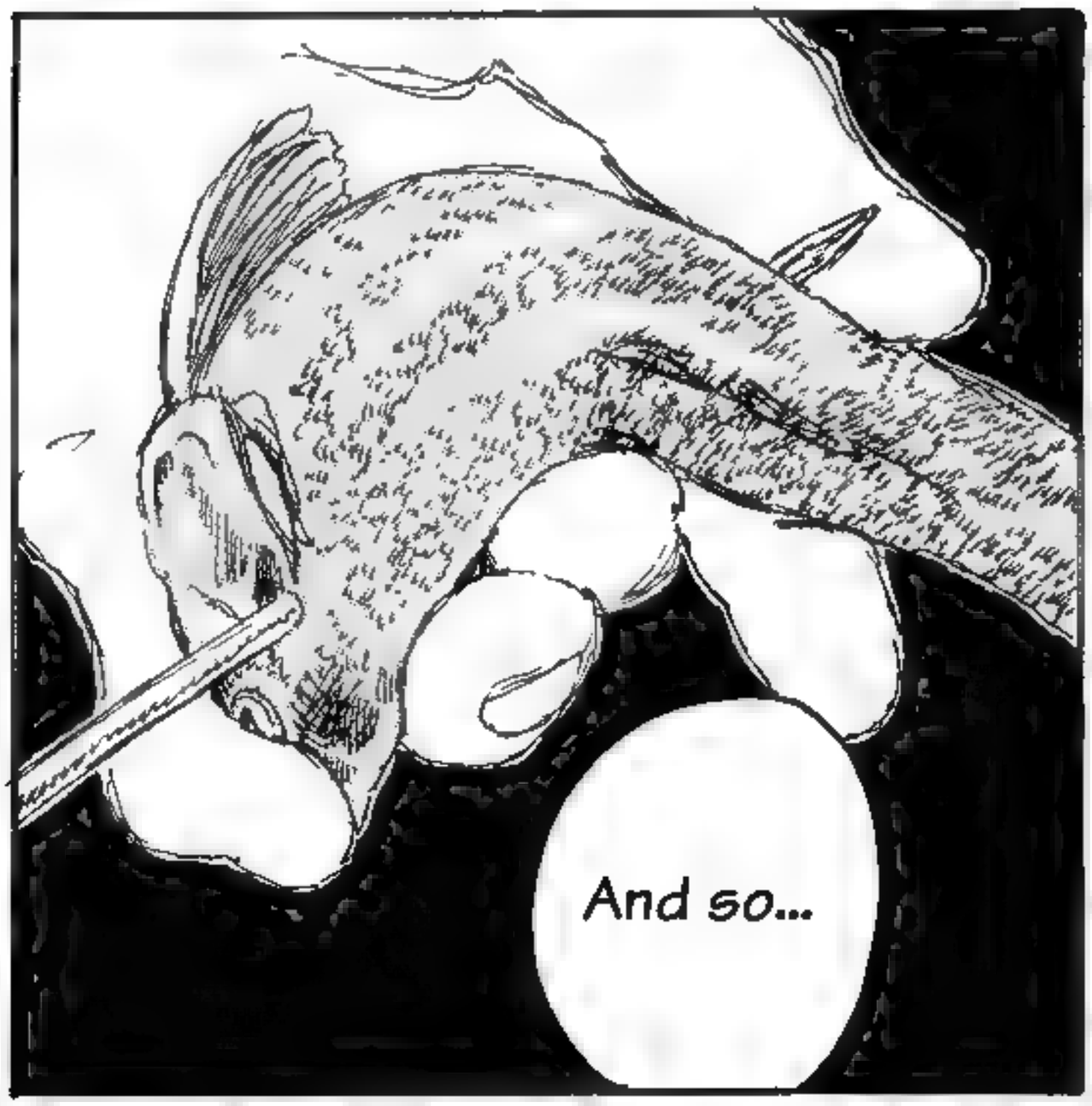
SPLASH

SPLASH


カチ
crick


pfft
プシュー

skkrch skkrch
カリカリカ


And so...

squeeze
ムリュ

making other people do the killing first, and then complaining about the way they did it.

I thought, you know, I didn't want to lead the kind of life where I was

Yeah. It's great.

The roasted trout with salt is good, but this trout miso soup is even better.

It's good.

All I did was chop it into chunks, boil it, and add some miso, though.

Isn't it?

ブィ ブィ
Bzzt
ビュウ
Brrr

I realized that they've lived their lives in a way where they can speak words that have substance to them.

the people of Komori... and my parents, too.

that I really started to respect

After I left here, it was the first time

Vrrm
ブォォン

I came here to escape.

Later

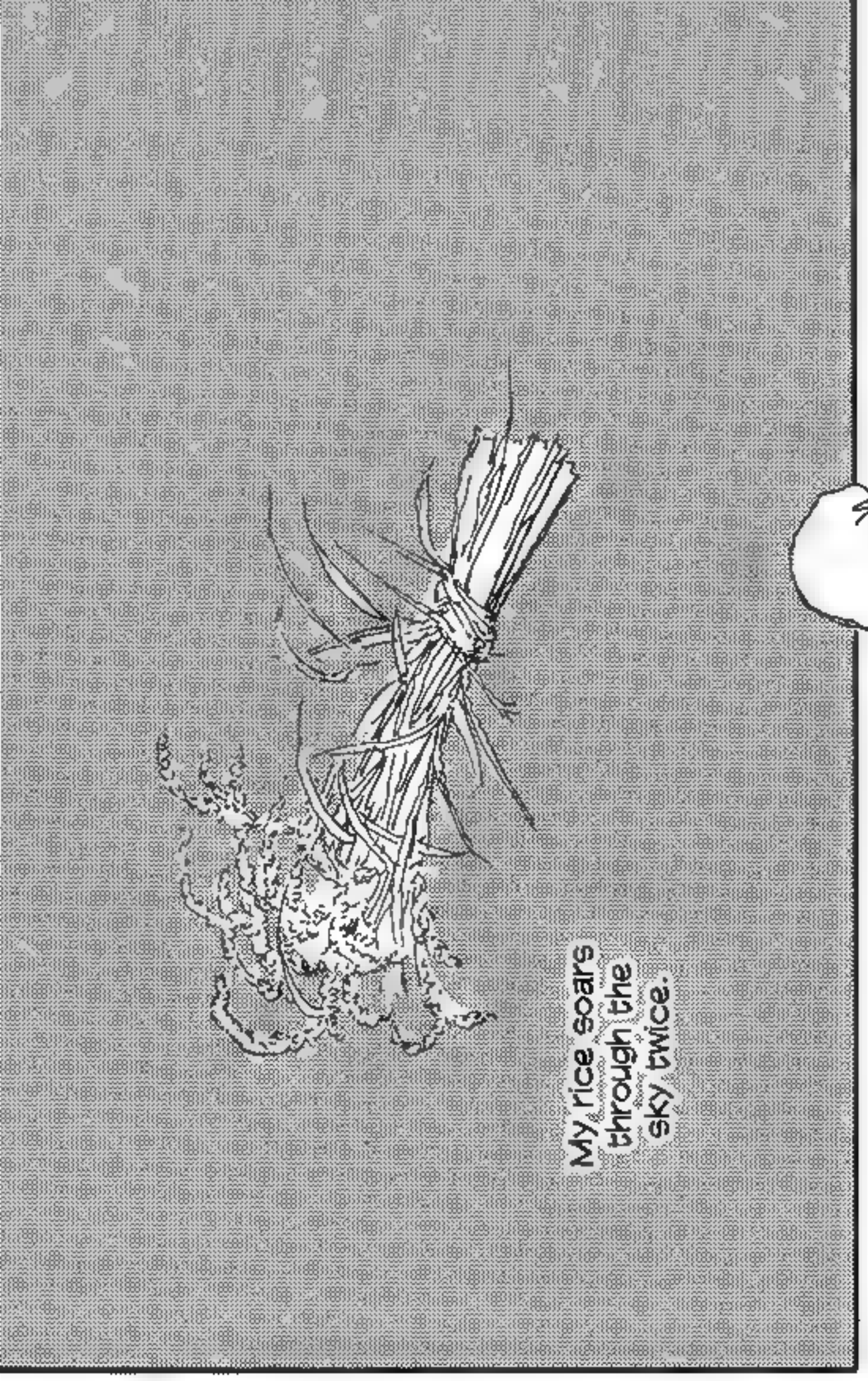
I think Yuta came back here so he could face his own life.

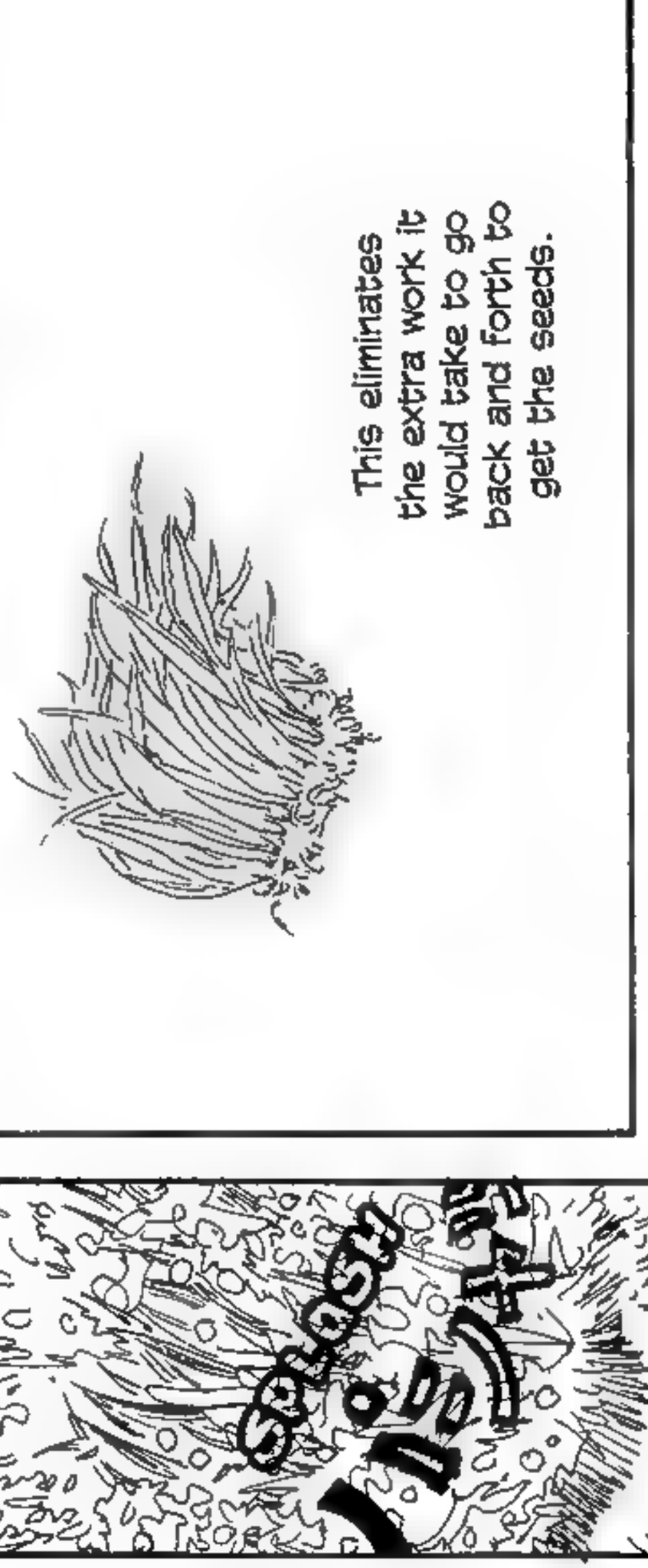
12th dish Trout END

If you want to give trout soup a more grassy flavor, you can scatter shredded green onions in it, add grated ginger, or include finely chopped daikon to go with it.

But it's definitely best roasted with some salt.

When I turned up a pile of cut grass that I had left on the side of the fields, because I thought it might be ready to be used as compost, a bunch of huge rhino beetle larvae came crawling out. They were all round, fat, magnificent little guys. I tried to put everything back the way it was, but I wonder if they were able to fully mature without any problems.

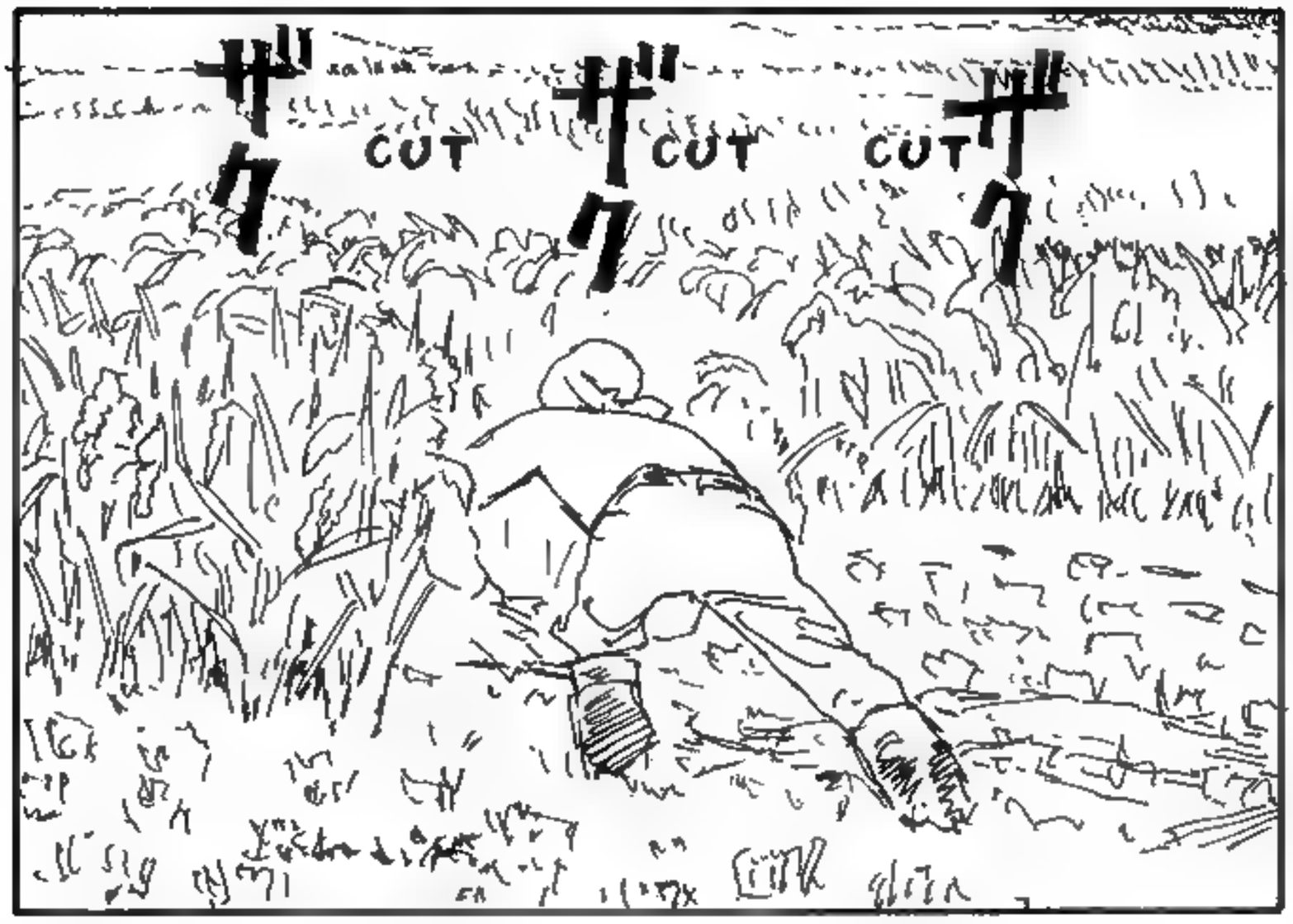




Little Forest

# 13th dish

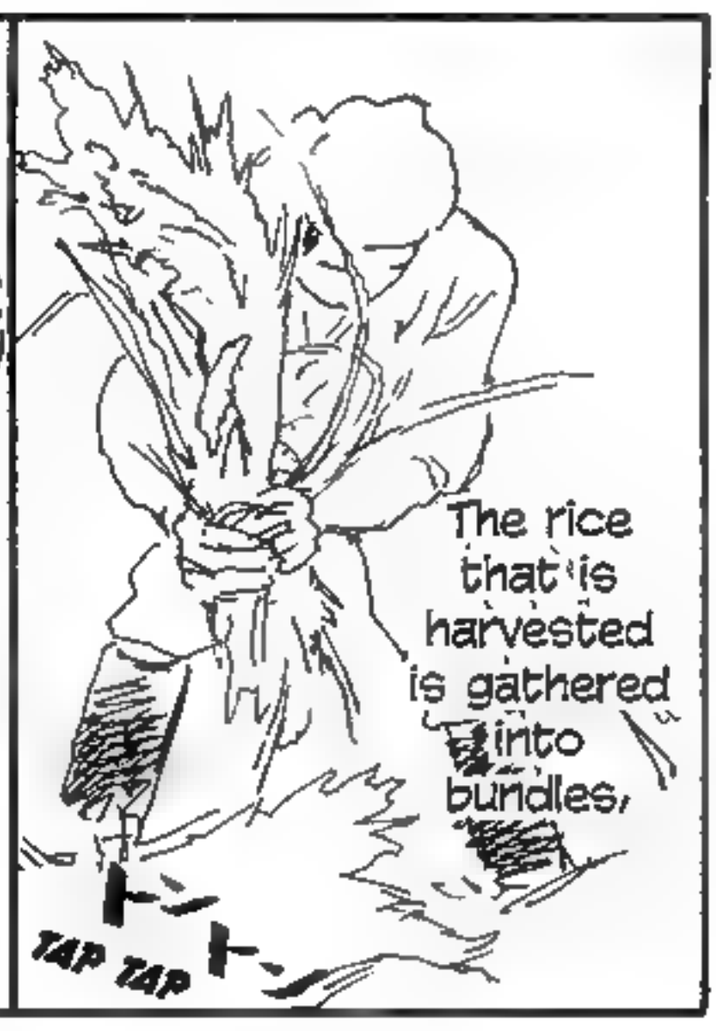
## Walnut Rice

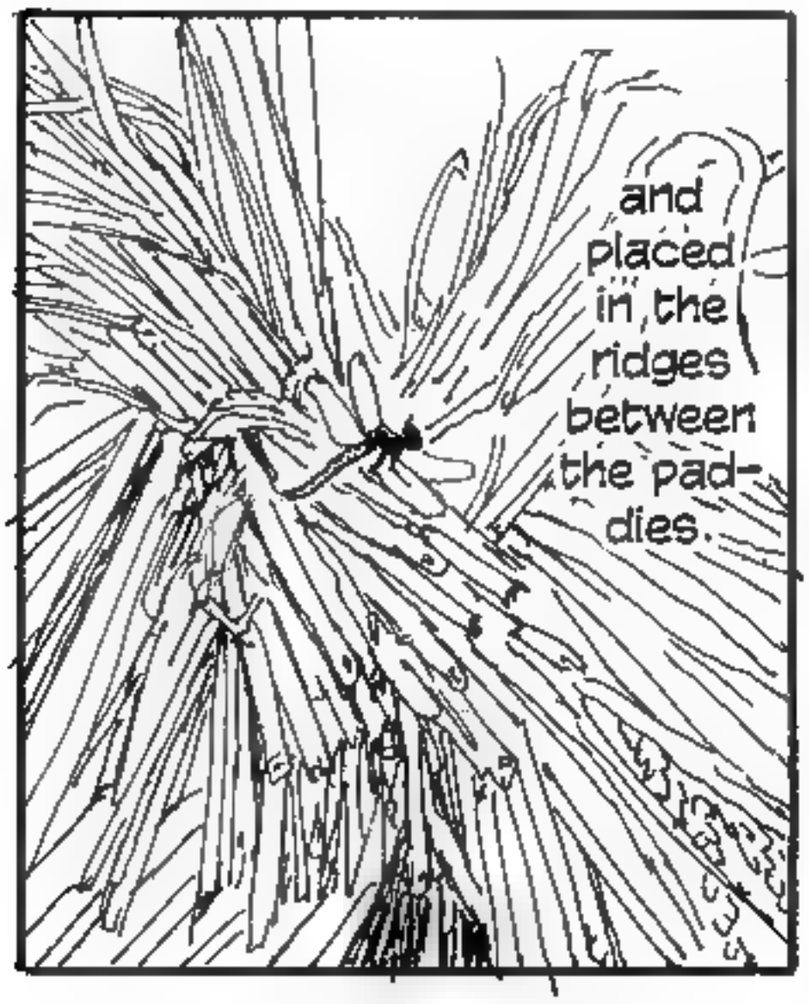

CUT
CUT
CUT

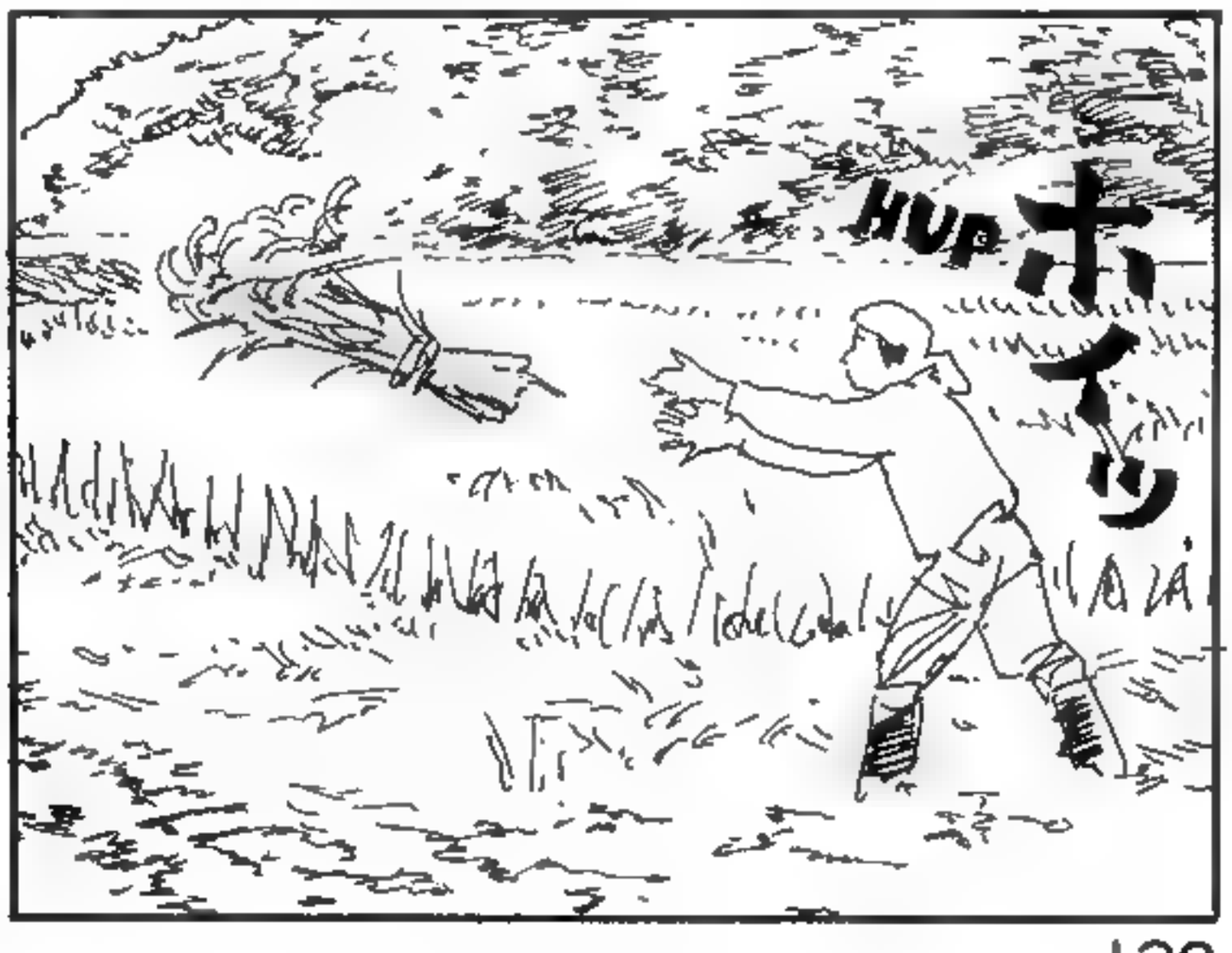
The second time is when the rice gets harvested.

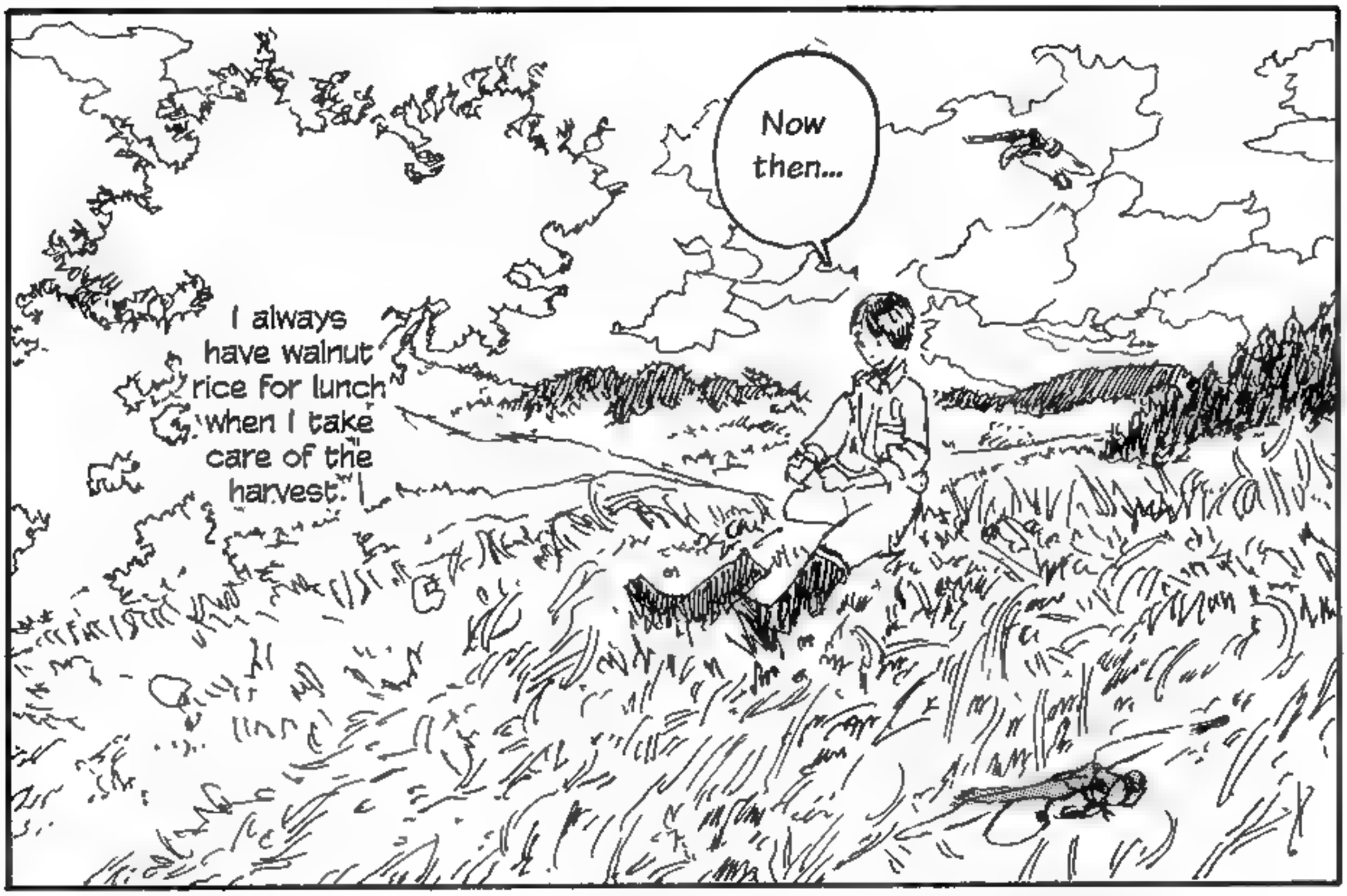
bound with straw.

TWIRL


The rice that is harvested is gathered into bundles,
TAP TAP


and placed in the ridges between the paddies.


HUP


Now then...
I always have walnut rice for lunch when I take care of the harvest.

Gathering the walnuts that have fallen along the muddied sides of the roads is a competition with the animals.
The sampling of this year's wares is once again a difficult task.

SWISH

When the skins decay and turn black, I give them a good wash and clean them up.

SPLASH! SPLISH!

I bury the walnuts I find in one of the corners of my yard.

The husks of the walnuts in Komori are thick and extremely hard, so cracking them open takes an incredible amount of effort.

If I place them inside nets to dry them out, I can keep them preserved for years on end.

I wrap them up in a towel and use a hammer.

and mix it into rice that I've washed.

Then I crush them into a paste with a mortar.

GRIND GRIND ゴスル ゴスル

I separate the fragments of the husk carefully.

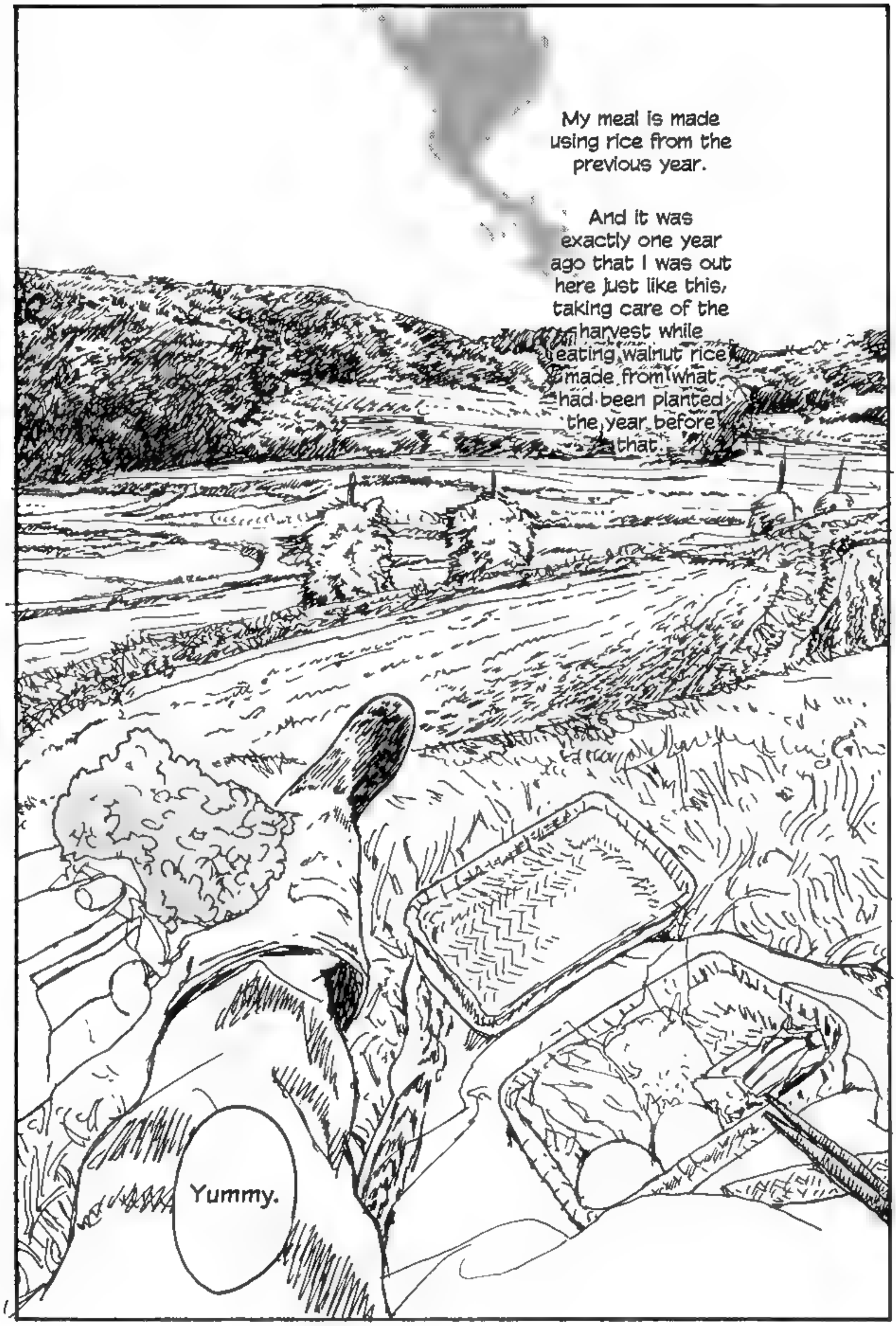
If any get left then I'll chip my teeth on them.

It's fragrant, has a lot of flavor, and is really good.

For every ten parts of rice I use two to three parts of the peeled walnuts, a bit less than one part of soy sauce, and just a bit of sake.

I add sake and soy sauce for flavor and cook it.

Time to eat!


My meal is made using rice from the previous year.
And it was exactly one year ago that I was out here just like this, taking care of the harvest while eating walnut rice made from what had been planted the year before that.
Yummy.

THUD

Hup

RUSTLE

Ichiko-chaaan!

rustle

I stack the bundles of rice to dry on every other one of the pillars that stand along the paddies.

You sure got a lot done.

Yeah, somehow.

I managed my own, anyways.

...Oh.

There's nobody like that for me.

Yeah ...

The city folk who took care of you sure will be pleased if you send some out to them.

Hey, when I wasn't around, did you still plant the seeds, and harvest the rice, and gather the walnuts, and...

That's right, we started doing it that way before you were even born. Years and years and *years* ago.



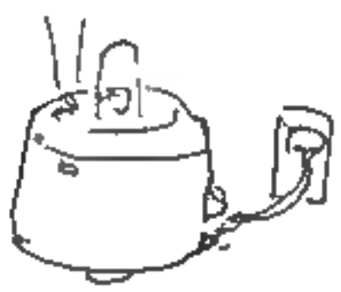
13thdish Walnut Rice END

Wet the rice and then strain it.

2

Roast the black sesame, grind it coarsely, then add the soy sauce and sugar.

3

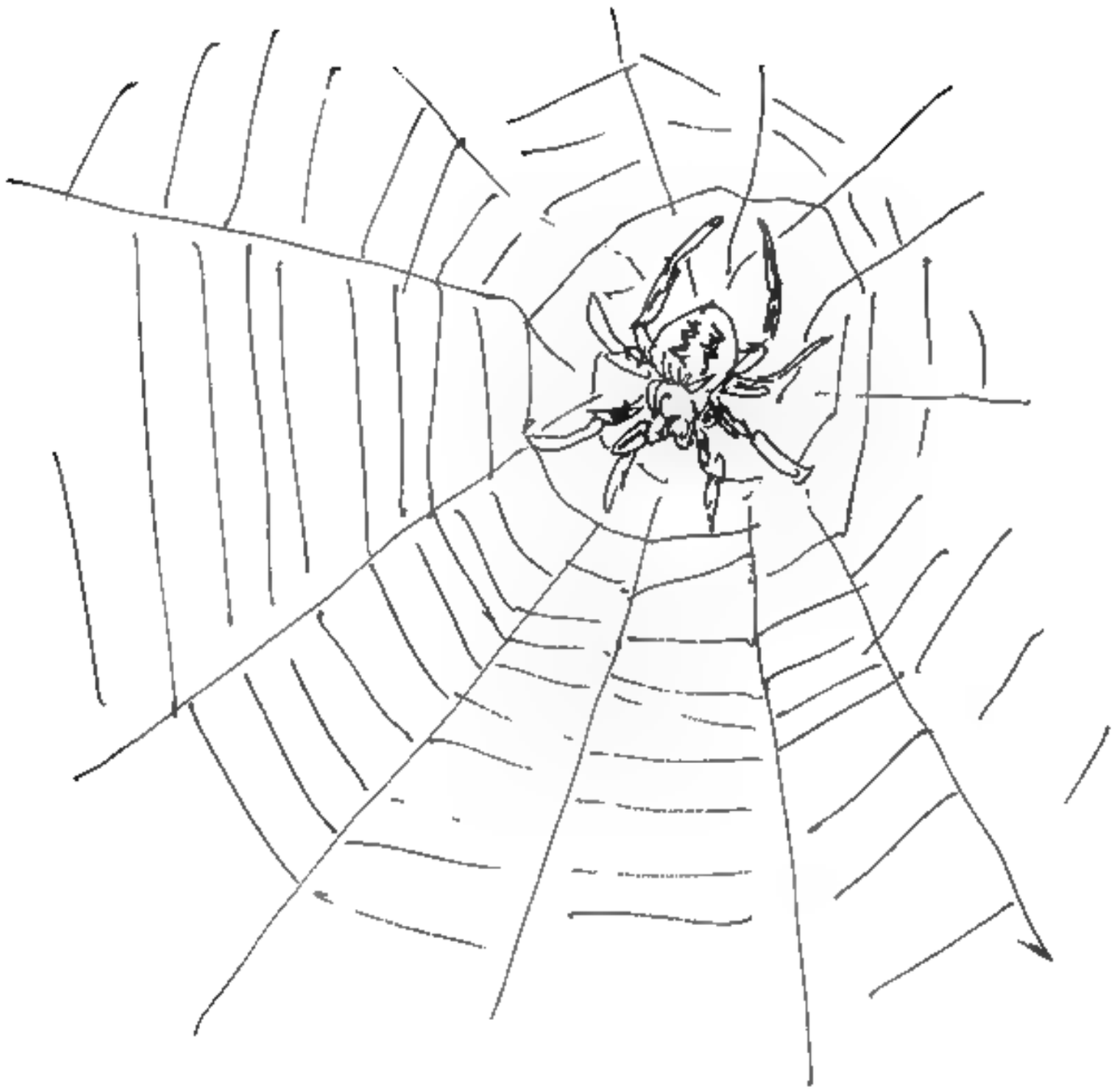


Mix it into the rice and cook it with the normal amount of water you would use.

## Black Sesame Rice

| | |
|---|---|
| Rice | 3 liters |
| Black sesame | 1/3 liter |
| Soy sauce | 1/3 liter |
| Sugar | A little less than 2 tablespoons |

You can use black sesame in place of walnuts and make black sesame rice, too.

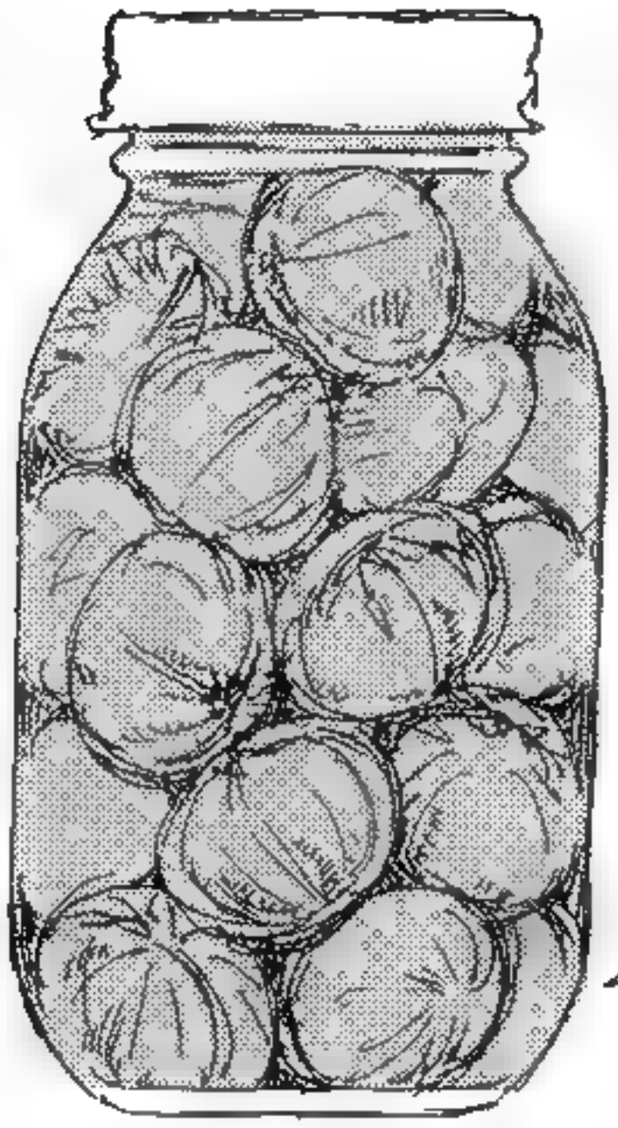


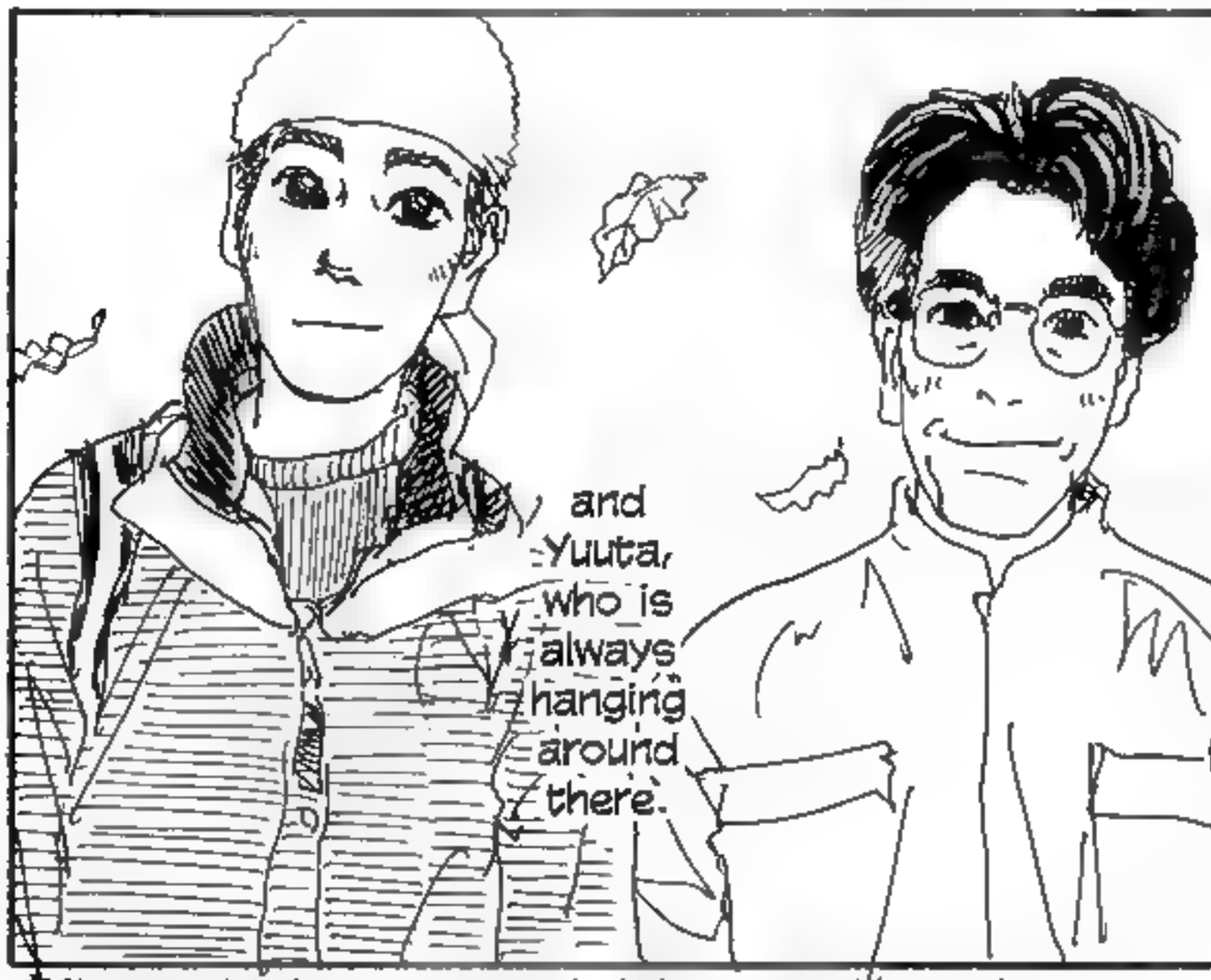
The orb-weaver spiders spin large circular webs under the overhangs or around trees during the summer evenings. These are places where people pass through all the time. It's such a bother when you wake up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom or something and walk into one. (My bathroom is located outside the entrance). But it must be a bother for them to have the web they spent so much time weaving broken as well.

# 14th dish

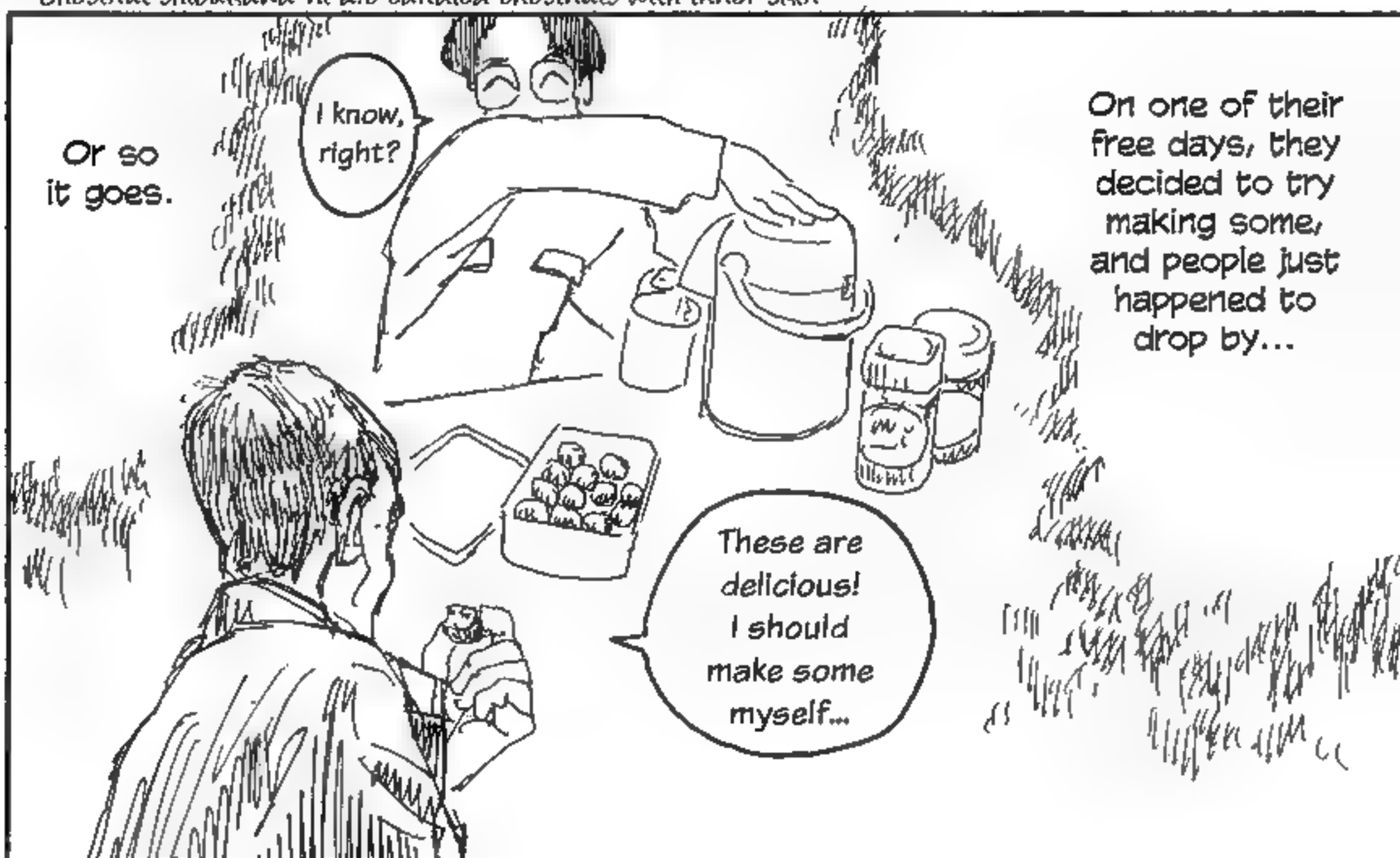
## Candied Chestnuts (Shibukawa-ni)

Candied chestnuts are getting popular.




and Yuuta, who is always hanging around there.
The people responsible for the trend are Shigeyuki-san from the camp-grounds,

*Chestnut shibukawa-ni are candied chestnuts with inner skin


Or so it goes.
I know, right?
On one of their free days, they decided to try making some, and people just happened to drop by...
These are delicious! I should make some myself...

ウィィィィィ WHIIN

ヴォン！ WRR!

ヴィィィィ VRIII

TOSHIBA

THU NK

ドドドド IIN

ウイイイイン VRIIIIN

イユウウウウ WEOOO

Hey! Take a break, why don't cha?

シン PUTT PUTT...

Phew.

Let's have some with tea.

Try a bite from my newest batch of candied chest-nuts.

Oh, fancy meeting you here, Kikko-chan.

Really? What'd you use to get rid of the bitter taste?

I put some red wine in 'em this time.

Baking soda.

Yup, candied chestnuts. I put some of my husband's brandy in them.

Hey, that's...

He doesn't drink it, anyways.

Great timing, I'm getting the water boiling right now.

so I thought I'd drop by,

since my husband went to the mountain today.

I heard the sound of the chain-saw,

WEEEE

Teacups, teacups!

Take a seat.

Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

skrch skrch

TOSHI

brush brush brush

skrch skrch

TOSHIBA

Good work today!

Chest-nuts are a favorite of theirs.

Ahh!

When you go out to pick chestnuts, you have to watch out for bears.

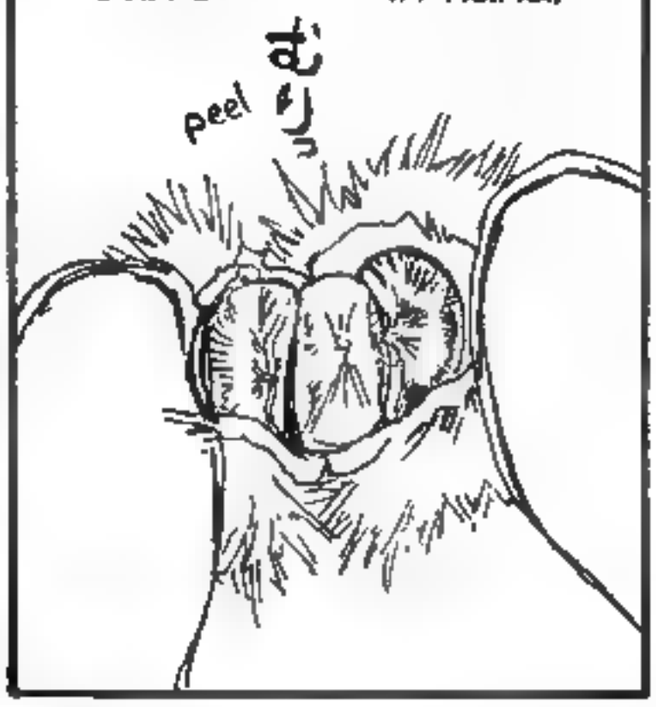
Caw

T/L Note This is the typical costume and tool that people go chestnut hunting with in Japan

They harden, so you need to peel off the outer skin quickly.

Lightly boiling older chestnuts makes them easier to peel.

With work boots on and tongs in hand, you take them out of their burrs.




Simmer it for half an hour over a weak flame the next day.

Leave it to soak overnight in water with pearl ash or baking soda.

Replace the water and simmer for half an hour.

Replace the water once more and simmer for another half an hour. As you repeat this, the liquid should become lighter and take on the color of wine.

The liquid will be bitter and completely black.

If you're going to eat them right away, then continue to let it boil down till there's no more syrup.

Add an amount of sugar equal to sixty percent of the weight of the chestnuts you've made, and let it boil down to a syrup.

During this process, remove the fiber and padding and clean it well.

If you leave them in the syrup for two to three months, the sugar will completely permeate them and they'll become all sticky. That's the way I like mine.

If you're going to preserve them, then boil down the syrup just a little bit and pour the chestnuts together with the syrup into a jar.

Eating those chestnuts feels exactly like biting into gyuuhl*.

You boil down the rest of the syrup when you eat them. It's also really tasty to add soy sauce or liquor when you do this to give it flavor.

Author Note: A candy that's similar to a soft mochi
It's made by kneading steamed glutinous rice with sugar and starch syrup

The wood from chestnut trees is generally quite easy to cut.

CHOP バカン

CHOP バカン

You can burn them at high temperatures and they make good firewood.

Hup.

CLUNK ゴタリ

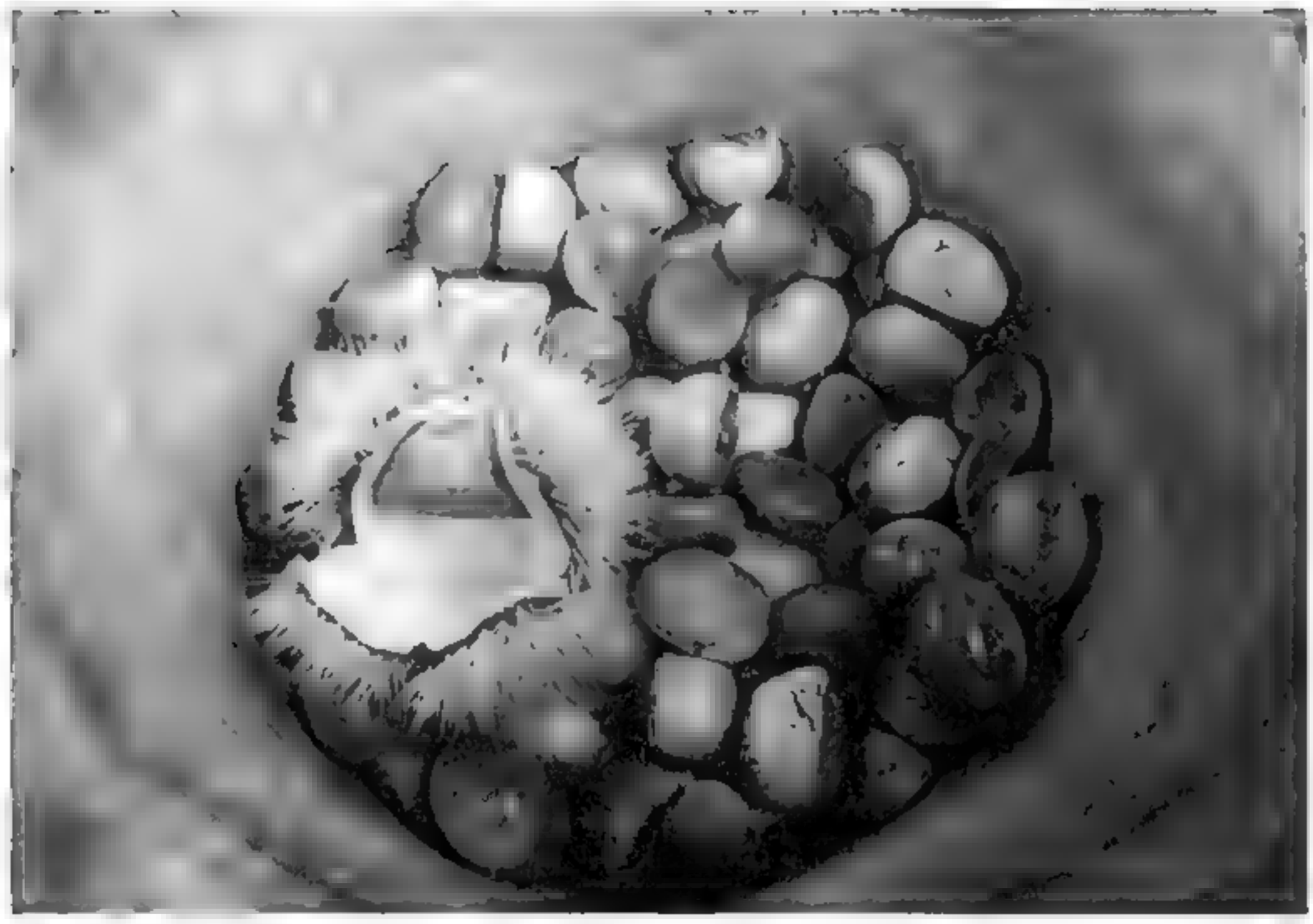
Chestnuts invite the cold to draw near.

CHOP バカン

Candied chestnuts to go with hot tea from a firewood stove.



14thdish Candied Chestnuts (Shibukawa-ni) END



Breakfast from a certain day was banana bread
with a sauté of apples and syrup-soaked chestnut.
The syrup-soaked chestnuts are made by parboiling
chestnuts in brine till they become soft, then adding
them to syrup made from equal parts water and sugar.
Once it boils, turn off the fire and let it stand overnight.

If I lower my perspective and gaze out into the paddies, they looks like enormous jungles.

Generally speaking, there are large varieties of living creatures that make the rice paddies their home. As such, creatures that feed on them will gather, and creatures that feed on those other creatures will too...

Little Forest

# 冬・フキノトウ

## 15th dish

Carrots and Greens

On frosty mornings, you can see white smoke making it's way up all across Komori.

Like from the heating of the shiitake mushroom farms,

or the smoke from making rice hull charcoal.

I set a fire under the device that makes the char-coal.

Frost every-where.

Frosty frost.

I spread it around the fields and paddies and it improves the soil.

I make a mountain out of the hulls from the rice.

Rice hull charcoal is made from them.

For example, I plant varieties of carrots in lines, sprinkle soil lightly over them,

It's also very useful when sowing seeds.

, and also maintains the level of moisture so it doesn't get too dry.

It helps prevent the soil from stiffening when it's hit by strong rains,

and then cover it with rice hull charcoal.

You grow them so they all spring up around densely.

The sprouts are really important when it comes to carrots.

Carrots are part of the parsley family and prefer high amounts of moisture.

Carrots are members of the parsley family, right?

I've heard it a million times already.

After all...

If you don't let the carrots compete a bit while they're growing, then they won't turn out well.

It's fine to take your time to thin them out.

Mom

Note Male ones = male roots

And do the spinach too.

I'm going to make a stew, so just pull up the male ones.

No complaining! Do it before you take off your shoes!

What!?

I'm home.

Great timing, go pull up some carrots for me.

even though that sounds plausible,

They've got a lot of flavor to them, so these are better for western stews.

it would probably be normal to start with them when you're thinning the crop, but...

The male roots of the carrot are tough and hard, so

You're so sloppy!

The plants were all tangled up and it was a huge task just in itself to pull up a single one.

when I saw the carrot fields which were full of weeds and simply unkept, I realized it was just an excuse.

But the stew and the spinach sauté were good anyways.

It's farming using weeds!

You're a liar! And you're sloppy!

I'm not sloppy. I left the weeds in there to compete with them in place of the sprouts that didn't grow in well.

There are all sorts of greens in the fields. I have something all whole year round.

I thought I knew how to make my mom's sautéed greens until I tried doing it myself.

I pluck the greens around at the time,

mustard spinach that the bugs love too,

and so on.

malabar spinach that grows even in the middle of summer,

rosette bok choy in the winter,

Mizuna that's crisp raw,

have different textures.

The process should be the same, and yet my mother's and mine

sauté them, season them, and arrange them.

wash them, chop them,

still tasted good when my mother cooked them.

Even greens that were past their harvest and overripe,

It doesn't matter if I add ginger or not.

ぐくぐく ぐくぐく bubble bubble

I'm sure she didn't parboil them.

It's all stringy.

But when I make them...

It doesn't matter if I flavor it with soy sauce or salt, or if I add meat or not.

It tastes fine... But it's still stringy...

じゃんか sizzle じゃんか sizzle じゃんか

It doesn't matter if I add onions or not.

Oh! There it goes! It's working!

What if I peeled the fibers off the greens too...?

One day, when I was peeling the fibers off of celery, I realized what it was.

It was spot on.

She *did* put real effort into it.

You probably think it's fine as long as it's edible. You're so dense.

All that's for dinner is vegetable sauté? How about making something that takes a little effort?

-+!! MEOW

Maybe I was the one who was being sloppy and dense.

+f+h SKRCH

I guess I should pluck some spinach to use for breakfast.

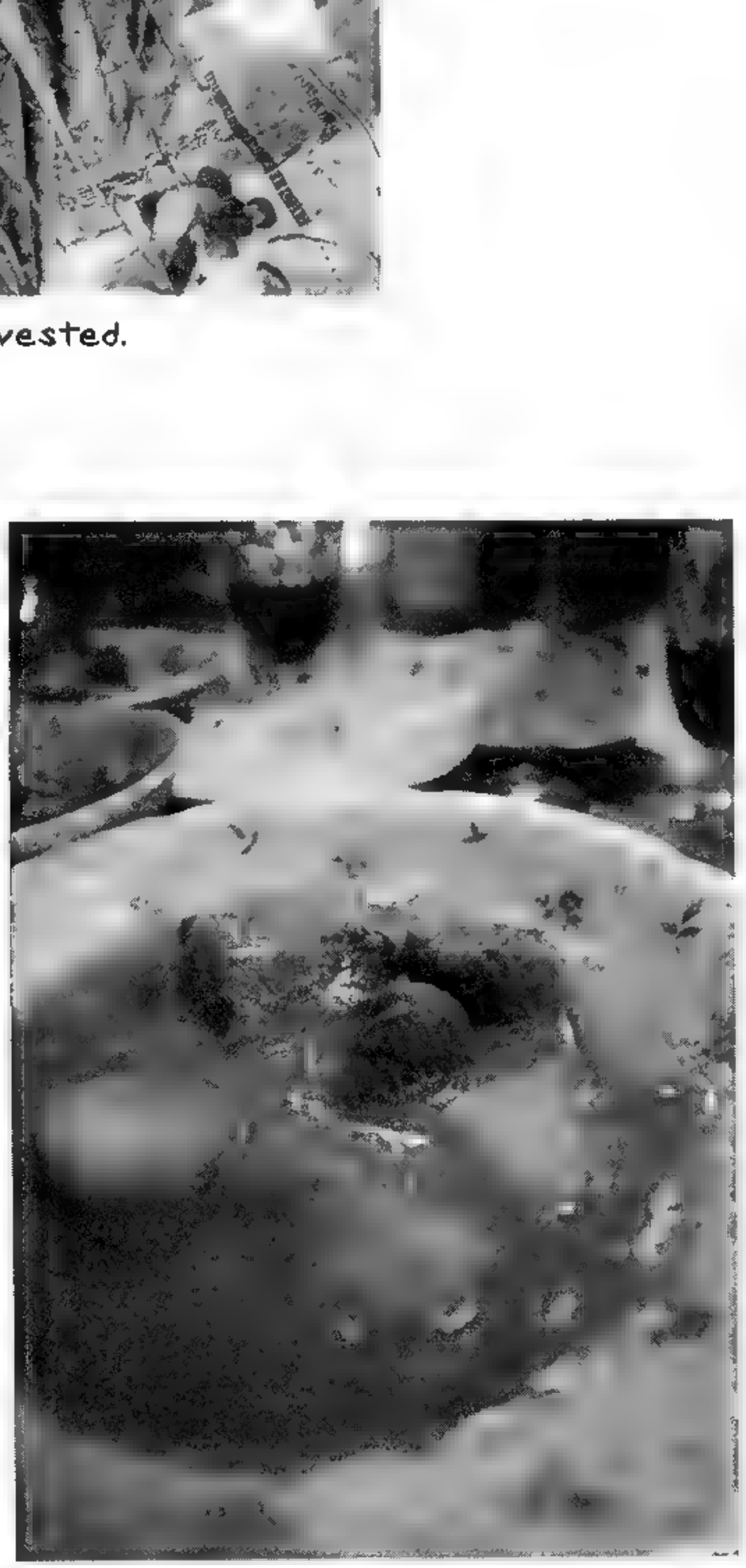
CICK

gets remarkably sweet and is really tasty!

Spinach that's had frost on it,

Carrots that I harvested.

For western style meat type stew dishes, I usually add grated carrots separately as an ingredient to increase the flavor.



Beef Stew

When it comes to pests that eat and cause damage to watermelons, melons, and corn, the names that always come up are "mujina", "mami", and "karasu". "Karasu" are obviously crows, but I didn't know what "mujina" and "mami" were. When I asked the older ladies around here, it seemed that "mujina" are most likely badgers and "mami" are martens. However, depending on who you ask, they may tell you that it's the other way around...
I guess I just don't get it.

Ichiko-chan!

I made too much for myself.

I am on my own.

Thanks, as always.

Ichiko-chan.

but somehow I end up eating some every year.

I don't really tend to make any of the new year's dishes,

I only set up preparations for mochi dishes.

Thank you.

It's nothing, I made tons.

Little Forest

# リトル・フォレスト

## 16th dish

Shrimp Mochi and Ginger Mochi

There are times when all it has is shredded daikon from the thinned out seedlings.

but the ingredients depend on whatever people are in the mood for that year.

The new year's soup is seasoned with soy sauce and dashi,

After hearing that, I gave it a try.

I hear on the coasts they even put salted salmon roe on top.

At a mochi pounding gathering, I had one with all sorts of things like taro and mushrooms.

I heard that at my teacher's house, they take the mochi out of the new year's soup and eat it with walnut sauce.

Freshwater shrimp is one of the things that I need to prepare for new year's.

The next day, I scoop them up with a net.

DRIP DRIP

I submerge bundles of straw in reservoirs or backwaters of the stream.

There they are.

PUT PUT PUT PUT PUT PUT

When I mix the mochi together with the shrimp and top it with soy sauce and mirin...

I dry roast them in a frying pan and save them for later.

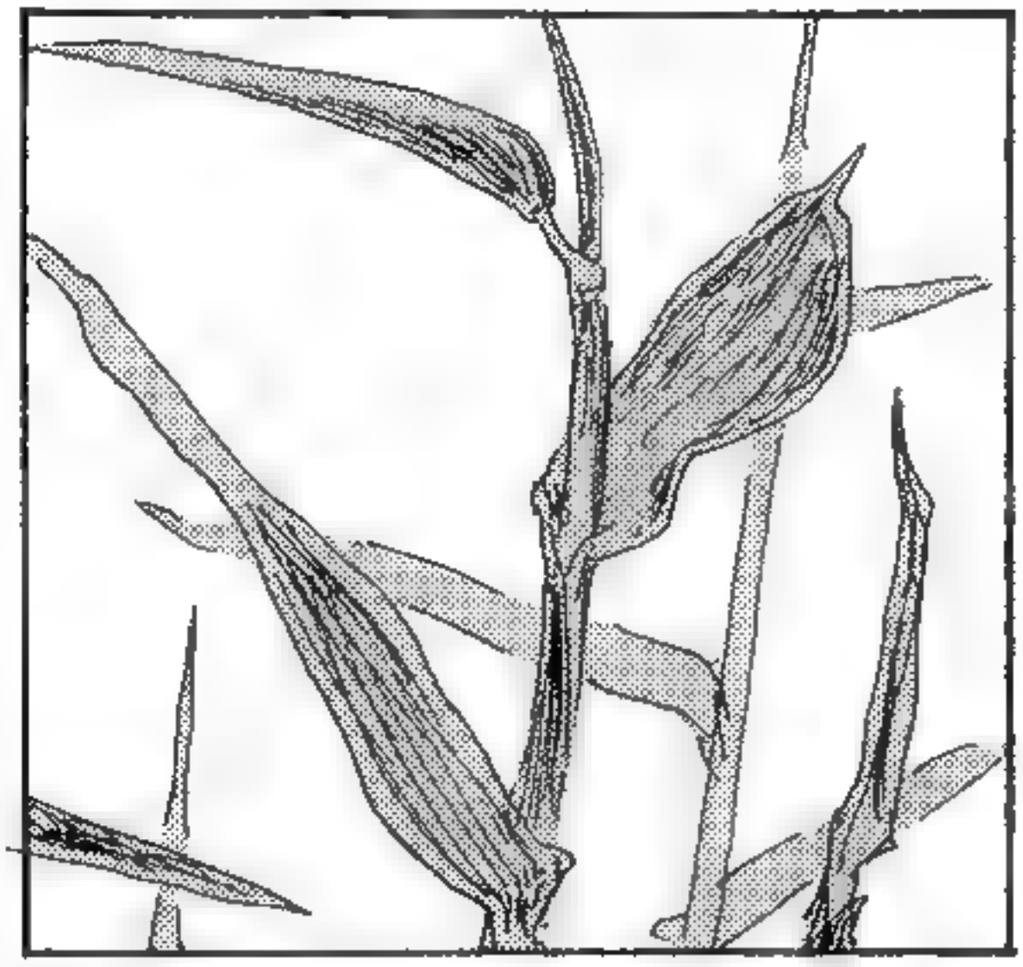
I get shrimp mochi.

Ginger mochi is thin slices of chopped raw shiitake mushrooms or carrots and such, simmered together with mochi using soy sauce for flavoring, with a thick sauce made from squeezed ginger juice and potato starch on top of it.

At the beginning of summer, I buried a type of ginger in one of the corners of the fields where there was a lot of moisture.

I dig it up before it starts to get frosty.

Here we go



And then new year's morning arrives.

If it dries out too much it gets moldy, so I freeze the parts that I will use raw.

Thank you for the food.

A Combination Platter of the New Year's Dishes I Received.

Boiled Bracken in Bonito Soy Sauce

Black Beans

Simmered Vegetables

Walnut sauce

Grated Daikon

Home-brew Style Sake

Natto-Mochi

Green Mochi

Shrimp Mochi

New Year's Soup with Salted Salmon Rice

How can mochi be so tasty?

Sesame mochi, juune mochi, mashed eda-mame mochi, tofu mochi, fusube mochi...

I can't finish all this by myself.

If you were human, then I'd be able to teach you all about these things.

But I've already got the red beans boiling for tomorrow's red-bean soup.

tweet

chirp

rustle rustle

16th dish Shrimp Mochi and Ginger Mochi

END

Natto mochi and shrimp mochi.

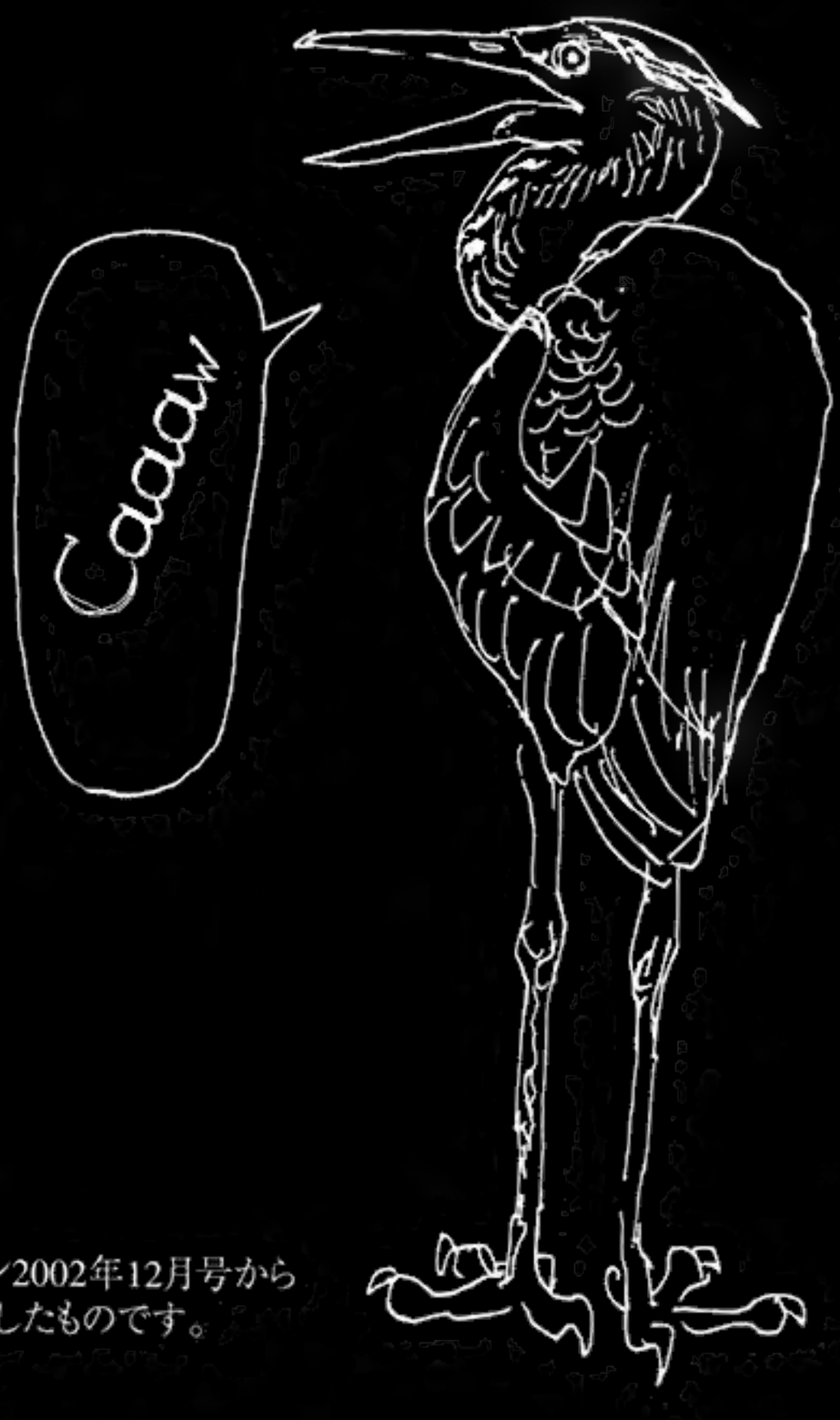
Egoma is one of the members of the perilla family. You can make oil out of the seeds and kimchi from the leaves. It's really tasty.

This is juune mochi.

"Juune" is a glaze that's made from roasting egoma seeds and black sesame seeds, and combining that with about half of its portion of soy sauce and sugar. It has a distinct flavor and is really tasty.

While working the fields, a sound that I had heard before reached my ears. "Kyorororororo..." It was the twitter of a ruddy kingfisher, a bright red bird I had become quite familiar with in my previous travels. On one morning, I was welcomed with the call of a white-bellied green pigeon. It came from the forest behind my house and sounded exactly like a child practicing the recorder. Even if they can't be seen or if they aren't always around, these migratory birds are also residents of Komori that color the seasons.

Little Forest 1 END




『リトル・フォレスト』第1巻は、月刊アフタヌーン2002年12月号から
2004年2月号までに掲載された作品を収録したものです。

ワイドKCアフタヌーン551

# リトル・フォレスト 1

2004年8月23日　第1刷発行
2011年1月7日　第10刷発行
（定価はカバーに表示してあります）

著　者　五十嵐大介（いがらしだいすけ）
発行者　清水保雅
発行所　株式会社 講談社
〒112-8001
東京都文京区音羽2-12-21
電　話　編集部　東京（03）5395-3463
販売部　東京（03）5395-3608
装　丁　ARTEN
印刷所　図書印刷株式会社
製本所　株式会社 国宝社

本書の無断複写（コピー）は著作権法上での例外を除き、禁じられています。

落丁本・乱丁本は購入書店名を明記のうえ、小社業務部までお送りください。送料小社負担にてお取りかえいたします（電話03-5395-3603）。なお、この本についてのお問い合わせはアフタヌーン編集部宛にお願いいたします。

アフタヌーン編集部では、この作品に対するご意見・ご感想をお待ちしております。また、単行本にまとめてほしい作品がありましたら、お知らせください。なお、お送りいただいたお手紙・おハガキは、ご記入いただいた個人情報を含めて著者にお渡しすることがありますので、あらかじめご了解のうえ、お送りください。

〒112-8001　東京都文京区音羽2-12-21
講談社アフタヌーン編集部　ワイドKCアフタヌーン係

講談社

©Daisuke Igarashi 2004,Printed in Japan
ISBN4-06-337551-X
N.D.C726 170p 21cm

# Glossary

**Amazake** - A traditional sweet, low-alcoholic Japanese drink made from fermented rice.

**Burdock** - The taproot of young burdock plants can be harvested and eaten as a root vegetable.

**Chapati** - An unleavened flatbread (also known as roti) from the Indian subcontinent.

**Daikon** - A mild-flavored, very large, white, East Asian radish.

**Dengaku Tofu** - A traditional Japanese tofu dish usually topped with a sweet miso sauce.

**Fusube Mochi** - A traditional regional dish made of loaches. Roasted loaches are ground into a powder and boiled together with burdock and daikon. Chili peppers are added to give it a kick.

**Hittsumi** - The name "hittsumi" comes from the Japanese verb "hittsumu", meaning to tear something off.

**Juune Mochi** - Mochi with egoma (perilla) seed paste.

**Konbu** - A sort of seaweed used extensively in the Japanese cuisine.

**Kouji** - There is a koji yeast mold that's sprinkled onto the rice and it only becomes koji rice malt once that has finished growing on there, so if she really starts from scratch with using koji it'll transition from one to the other through the story.

**Mochi** - Japanese rice cake made of glutinous (sticky) rice pounded into paste and molded into shape.

**Mirin** - An essential condiment used in Japanese cuisine, consisting of 40%-50% sugar. It is a kind of rice wine similar to sake, but with a lower alcohol content - 14% instead of 20%.

**Nanakusagayu** - A simple healthy seven-herb rice soup eaten in Japan on January 7th to give your overworked stomach a rest.

**Natto** - A traditional Japanese food made from soybeans fermented with Bacillus subtilis.

**Nishime** - A traditional Japanese vegetable stew sometimes prepared with either pork or chicken.

**Ohitashi** - A classic Japanese side dish, boiled spinach marinated in light soy and garnished with bonito flakes.

**Okonomiyaki** - A Japanese savoury pancake containing a variety of ingredients.

**Taro** - A tropical plant grown primarily as a vegetable food for its edible corm, and secondarily as a leaf vegetable.

**"The Frog in the Stomach"** - The Japanese words for "well" and "stomach" are homophones so the mom is making a pun here with the idiom "the frog inside the well", which is basically the Japanese equivalent to "big fish in a little pond".

**Tsukemono** - Literally "pickled things", are Japanese preserved vegetables (usually pickled in salt or brine).

**Tsukudani** - A small seafood, meat or seaweed dish that has been simmered in soy sauce and mirin. High osmotic pressure preserves the ingredients.